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Chess

GOLD & SILVER

Luke McShane helps England to a silver medal at the World Team Championships and picks up a gold medal on board two

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Gunina Gets Gold - the Russians dominated the inaugural Cairns Cup in St. Louis



James Sherwin - John Stubbs and Chris Beaumont interview the American legend



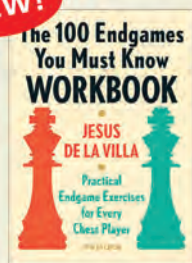
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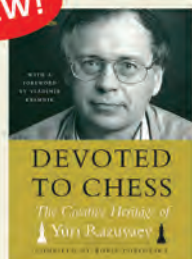
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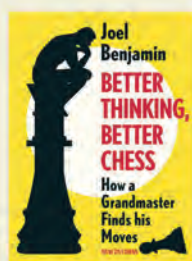
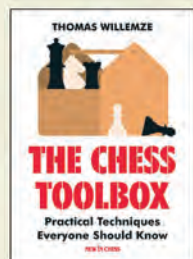
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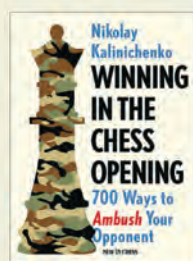
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Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein

 @TelegraphChess

Well done England. Following the tremendous fifth place at the Olympiad in Batumi last year, we were invited to the World Team Championships staged in Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan. The team of Michael Adams, Luke McShane, David Howell, Gawain Jones and Jon Speelman excelled themselves against the odds to win the silver medals, ahead of, amongst others, China and India.

It was an honour and a huge pleasure to be captain of a team that overcame adversity in the form of crammed schedules, hastily arranged and gruelling travel plans, and illness. As reported last month, I managed to secure some financial support from the Scheinberg family to whom we extend our thanks again. The short notice meant that we had to play with only our top four while our rivals had five players to choose from and could rest players at will.

There were excellent 2-2 draws with Russia and India and the only loss to China could easily have gone either way. The 3-1 victory over Iran was one of the most extraordinary matches England has ever played.

With just three weeks to go I was thinking of learning some openings again in case I was press-ganged into action. I am grateful to Jon Speelman for stepping in instead at the last minute. Speelman agreed to come along as emergency reserve and analyst so I could be non-playing captain. Jon wasn't supposed to play, but the night before the match against Iran it was clear Gawain Jones was simply to unwell to play.

There was no choice but to deploy Speelman, who was also unwell, just not as unwell as Gawain. Afterwards Speelman described himself as "sacrificial mutton", as he was pitted against the star of the Iranian team 15-year-old Ali Firouzja, described to me by Iranian team captain Ivan Sokolov as a "possible future Garry Kasparov".

It's worth noting that Jon Speelman and Michael Adams were also part of the gold-winning England team at the 1997 European Championship, as well as that Speelman won bronze medals for England in the 1985 and 1989 World Team Championships.

Jon was soon in difficulties against Firouzja and the nightmare scenario of going 0-1 down quickly in a team match reared its ugly head. On the last couple of occasions this has happened, against the Netherlands at Baku in 2016, and in the last round against Hungary at the European Team Championships in Crete in 2017, we crashed to a heavy defeat, but not this time.

I watched in awe as Mickey, Luke and

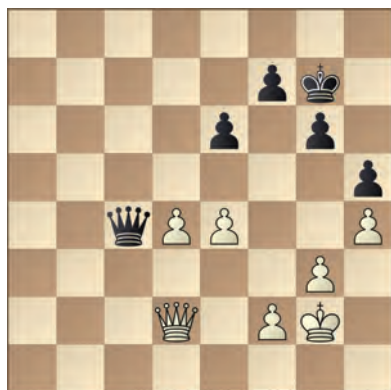


Despite the signs of illness already being present, not to mention the effects of the long haul to Kazakhstan, Jon Speelman stood in for Malcolm and drew no.5 at the opening ceremony.

David all won. Mickey's game was a real roller-coaster, David will annotate his brilliant game next month, and Luke was always

better, even if he gave me a heart-stopping moment at one point as he was trying to exploit an extra pawn.

L. McShane–P. Idani England vs Iran



There had been some manoeuvring after the time control. Luke has inadvertently just played 44 ♖e3–d2?, at which point I saw that 44...e5 equalises immediately. Although I was sitting a few feet away I didn't want to create any disturbance as it soon became clear both players were oblivious. I sank myself into my book (*A Horse Walks Into a Bar* by David Grossman – excellent by the way), and without much hesitation Idani returned the favour:

44...♟f8?

The danger now passes, whereas 44...e5! 45 dxe5 ♟xe4+ 46 ♟g1 ♟xe5 would have drawn. Luke now found a very clever way to convert his advantage. He was very modest about it afterwards, but figuring all this out with little time was very impressive.

45 ♟h2 ♟e8

45...e5! 46 dxe5 ♟xe4 47 ♟d8+ ♟g7 48 ♟f6+ ♟f8 was still a better chance. This looks very hard to win even though White retains his extra pawn.

46 ♟b2

Heading for e5, which is the right square for the queen.

46...♟c6 47 ♟b8+ ♟e7 48 ♟e5 ♟d7 49 ♟g2 f6 50 ♟f4 f5



51 d5!! exd5 52 exf5 d4+ 53 ♟h2 d3

White wins too after 53...gxf5 54 ♟xf5+ ♟d8 55 ♟f8+ ♟d7 56 ♟g7+ ♟e6 57 ♟xd4.

54 ♟d4+ ♟d6 55 ♟g7+! ♟c6

Or if 55...♟e7 56 f6!.

56 fxg6 d2 57 ♟c3+! ♟b5 58 g7 1-0

White gives the g-pawn for the d-pawn

and the position is a trivial win. If Black promotes then White promotes too and Black's king is too exposed.

Luke deserves a special mention, not only for his fantastic score on board two, but for his gritty defending against Egypt and Sweden where he played Black and his opponents attempted to grind him down in slightly superior positions in long games. Every time he rose to the challenge. He stayed ice cool here, whereas I nearly fell off my chair when after manoeuvring for 32 moves in this blocked position, Ahmed Adly of Egypt, who also had an excellent tournament, uncorked:



72 ♖e5!? fxe5+ 73 dxe5+ ♟c5 74 ♟g5 ♟xf5! Forcing a draw. 75 ♟xf5 d4 76 ♟f6 d3 77 ♟e7 ♟g6 78 e6 ♟b4 79 ♟d1 ♟c3 80 ♟f6 ♟e8 81 ♟e7 ½-½

Black can perpetually harass the white bishop and vice versa of course.

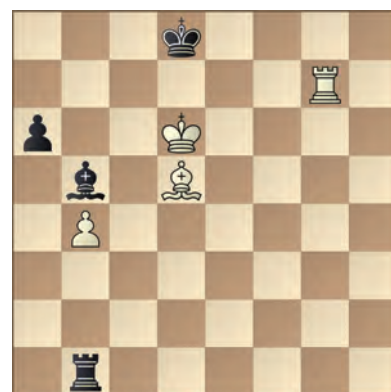
In the last round we just needed a win to secure silver so long as India did not defeat Russia. They nearly did, but we put the pressure on them by putting three points on the board against Sweden pretty quickly with wins for Howell, Adams and Jones. It was nearly a whitewash, but we didn't care – we

retired to the Cloud 9 Bar in the Hilton Hotel, which was aptly named for both how we were feeling and for the wonderful views from the top floor it had of the amazing modern buildings in Astana.

Twenty-two years of hurt. The last time England won a medal in international competition was 1997 when we won the gold medals at the European Team Championships and that was the last time we even qualified for the World Teams. I'm already looking forward to the European Team Championships this October.

I should, of course, also mention the winners. Russia looked untroubled throughout, even though their top board Sergey Karjakin had a torrid time and scored only 3/7. The home fans were absolutely delighted when the Kazakh top board Rinat Jumabayev, who greatly impressed, defeated the 2016 world championship finalist.

R. Jumabayev–S. Karjakin Kazakhstan vs Russia



The Minister of Defence had been suffering all game, but had thus far lived up to his nickname. Now pinning the bishop with



Michael Adams was another player who struggled with illness throughout the World Teams, but he won when it really mattered, against Sweden and young Iranian star Parham Maghsoodloo.

61...♖d1 holds, but Sergey blundered and was immediately lost:

61...♖xb4?? 62 ♖a7

Threatening mate. Black's reply is forced.

62...♙d7 63 ♖xd7+

Rook and bishop against rook is hard to defend, but usually a theoretical draw. Not here, however, when the black king is trapped on the back rank and faced by the white bishop and king.

63...♙e8

63...♙c8 64 ♖a7 is zugzwang: 64...♖b6+ 65 ♙c6 wins and 64...♖b2 65 ♖h7 threatens ♖h8 mate when 65...♙b8 66 ♖h8+ ♙a7 67 ♖a8+ ♙b6 68 ♖b8+ picks up the rook.

64 ♖e7+ ♙f8 65 ♖f7+ ♙e8 66 ♖f3! ♖d4

Or if 66...a5 67 ♙c6+ ♙d8 68 ♖f8#.

67 ♖b3 ♙f8 68 ♖g3 1-0

Even without Hou Yifan and Women's World Champion Ju Wenjun, China dominated the Women's Championship, winning all nine matches. The key victory was over Russia when on top board Tan Zhongyi demolished the defences of Kateryna Lagno.

Tan Zhongyi-K.Lagno

China vs Russia



19 ♖b1! ♖xa4?

19...♙e7 20 ♖c5+ ♙xc5 21 dxc5 ♖d3 22 cxb6 ♖xb1 23 ♖xb1 axb6 looks fine for Black, but White can play 22 ♖b2! ♖b5 23 ♖xe5 ♖d7 24 ♖e3 when the practical difficulties of defending the position would be considerable even if the computer only awards it '+0.9'.

20 ♖xb4+ ♖b6 21 a4!?

21 dxe5 looks even better.

21...a5?!

21...♖d6 22 ♖b2 a5 was much better, as 23 dxe5 ♖b4 secures a queen exchange.

22 ♖xa5 ♖a8 23 ♖e1 ♖xa4 24 ♖c3 ♖xd4 25 ♖xe5!

Undermining the dark squares, as we shall see. 25 ♙xd4 ♖xd4+ 26 ♙h1 f5 is not so clear.

25...♖c4 26 ♖e4 ♖d5 27 ♖xg7 ♖d8 28 ♖c5+ ♖c8 29 ♖a1! ♙b8 30 ♖a6+ ♙b7



31 ♖xc7! 1-0 31...♖xc1 32 ♖xc1 ♙xc7 33 ♖a7+ ♙c8 34 ♖xb6 wins.

We will of course have much more on our medal-winning performance and the World Teams next month.



The unlikely lads – 22 years of hurt is evident on some faces, determination and tiredness on others, but England did tremendously well and really did bag the silver medals in Astana.



Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, has some very impressive buildings, not least the Nur Alem Pavilion which was built for the Expo 2017 Astana.



60 Seconds with... Blair Connell



Best thing about playing chess: Meeting people like Simon Williams, Keith Arkell and David Howell, who are all brilliant players and, perhaps even better, great characters.

Worst thing: Playing in a team and letting your team-mates down.

Best move? It's not unique, but I'd known about 10...♟f5 for over 20 years and I finally got the chance to play it against IM Graeme Buckley in the London League last year. I believe Wood Green only lost one board in their first 10 matches (100 games) at the start of that year and this was it:

G.Buckley-B.Connell

Wood Green vs Richmond 2018

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟c6 3 ♟b5 ♟ge7 4 ♟c3 g6 5 d4 exd4 6 ♟d5 ♟g7 7 ♟g5 h6 8 ♟f6 ♟xf6 9 ♟xf6+ ♟f8 10 ♟xd4



10...♟f5! 11 ♟xc6 dxc6 12 exf5 ♟xf6 13 ♟d2 ♟xf5 14 0-0-0 ♟g7 15 ♟he1 ♟d7 16 ♟b1 ♟he8 17 a3 b6 18 f4 ♟g4 19 ♟f3 ♟xf3 20 gxf3 ♟xe1 21 ♟xe1 ♟d8 22 ♟e3 ♟d5 23 ♟c1 c5 24 ♟e4 ♟d6 25 ♟e3 ♟d1+ 26 ♟a2 ♟d5+ 27 ♟b3 ♟xb3+ 28 ♟xb3 ♟f6 29 f5 gxf5 30 ♟h4 ♟g5 31 ♟h3 f4 32 a4 ♟a1 33 ♟c3 ♟xa4 0-1

But less memorable than your worst move: Possibly not as I consider a direct attack to be a tactic, so there are quite a few to pick from.

Highly memorable opponent: I recently played at the fantastic Bunratty Masters

against Luke McShane. I think I surprised him when I played ...♟c6-e7-g8. Later he played ♟b3-a1 just to demonstrate than anything I could do, he could easily do better. A true gentleman.

Favourite game of all time: Without doubt Radoslaw Wojtaszek against Simon Williams. I could live a number of lifetimes and not create such beauty on a chess board.

R.Wojtaszek-S.Williams

French Team Championship 2011

Dutch Defence

1 d4 e6 2 ♟f3 f5 3 g3 ♟f6 4 ♟g2 ♟e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♟c2 a5 8 ♟c3 ♟c6 9 b3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♟d1 ♟e8 12 ♟b5 ♟h5 13 ♟xc7 f4!!



14 ♟xa8 ♟c5 15 ♟d5? ♟b4 16 ♟xe5 ♟xc2 17 ♟xh5 ♟xh5 18 ♟b1 fxg3 19 hxg3 ♟xg3 20 ♟b2 ♟f5 0-1

Best three chess books: *Blunders and Brilliances* by Ian Mullen and Moe Moss, which is great fun, *Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky, and *The Killer Dutch* by Simon Williams.

Can chess make one happy? Hope springs eternal.

A tip for the club player: Don't get bogged down in GM theory! Pick some openings you enjoy like the Jobava London system, which was responsible for adding 60 points to my highest chess.com blitz rating, taking it from 2450 to 2510. It was then great to record *Double Tuition: The Jobava London System* with Simon himself for GingerGM.

Born: 1st September 1976, Chester.

Place of residence: My family moved to Netherlands then to Guildford, where I live now.

Enjoyable? Humour irreverence and meeting good people.

Home life: About to change as we are getting a Labradoodle puppy, which should be fun.

But sometimes good to escape to: My beloved local pub, the Astolat which has many likeable characters.

Favourite sports: I love watching as well as playing darts, and also watching golf. Are these sports?

Favourite novel: I stopped early at *Noddy Goes Fishing*, so this may still be to come.

Piece of music: Led Zeppelin's *Going to California*, especially the live 1975 version. I love the song and Robert Plant reminds me of Simon Williams' brother Paul, the embodiment of understated cool.

Film or TV Series: *Making a Murderer* and *Death on the Staircase* – they're both puzzles I want to solve.

Gunina Dazzles

Irina Krush was up there throughout, but it was to be a Russian victory on American soil as Valentina Gunina saw off compatriot Alexandra Kosteniuk in the first Cairns Cup

The inaugural Cairns Cup took place in that modern-day chess capital of not just the U.S., but almost the world, Saint Louis. Named after Rex Sinquefield's wife, Dr. Jeanne Sinquefield, née Cairns, the tournament was a prestigious 10-player all-play-all for many of the world's leading female players, as they battled for a \$150,000 prize fund.

Notably only two American players were invited, both former U.S. Women's Champions, namely GM Irina Krush and IM Anna Zatonskih, as the Cairns Cup, like the Sinquefield Cup each August, was very much an international event. There was an unfortunate lack of players from that modern-day powerhouse for women's chess, China, and neither Muzychuk was able to take part, but GM Dronavalli Harika represented India, while the first and third seeds both hailed from Russia, namely Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina.

Which country have we yet to mention which supplied the second and fourth seeds? You likely worked out it was Georgia, who were represented by Nana Dzagnidze and Bela Khotenashvili. IM Elisabeth Paehtz from Germany, GM Marie Sebag of France and IM Zhansaya Abdumalik from Kazakhstan completed the stellar line-up. The majority of players were in their thirties, albeit with ages ranging from Zatonskih at 40 down to young Abdumalik who is still only 19 and a great prospect for Asian chess.

The early leader on 2½/3 was Kosteniuk, closely followed by both Gunina and Krush. The Sinquefields must have been delighted to see both an American player on a plus score and more than half the games being decisive. Both those trends would continue throughout the tournament, with 56% of the games featuring a winner, while even the only two games drawn in under 30 moves (by repetition) were not exactly dull.

Those early rounds largely set the pattern for the tournament. By the end of round 6 Gunina had caught up Kosteniuk, with Krush breathing down their necks on 4½/6. However, Kosteniuk would then draw her next two games, while Krush who would otherwise enjoy an excellent tournament, likely overplayed her hand as she went down to defeat against Sebag. That left Gunina to pull out a half-point lead entering the final round courtesy of victory over Zatonskih.

The ninth round saw the two leaders finally meet and this was no prearranged draw to maintain harmony between friends and potentially keep the Russian chess



A tense final round encounter heads towards its conclusion. Valentina Gunina (right) no longer has her mighty pawn on a2, but would simplify the position to draw with Alexandra Kosteniuk.

authorities happy. Kosteniuk became but the latest player to fail to impress in an anti-Berlin, quickly finding herself worse as White, tied down to a backward d-pawn. Eventually she got d3-d4 in and we pick up the action in the midst of the time scramble.

A.Kosteniuk-V.Gunina Round 9



35...d4

Hitting the white queen, but Black should have taken control of the c-file. After 35...c7 36 b1 b6 White's defences would have been quite solid, but it wouldn't have been at all easy for her to find a way to try and win the game.

36 h4 f7?

This square was needed for the knight.

37 b2

Suddenly White threatens the queen and has ideas of dxe5. The initiative is Kosteniuk's.

37...a7 38 c6

38 f2! would have overprotected e3 and after 38...c7 39 a1 White's central pressure might yet have led somewhere.

38...g8

Wisely eliminating any notion of f6. Now the machine argues for the sensible 39 h2, improving the king while keeping up the pressure. Kosteniuk, however, opted for full mobilisation of her pieces.

39 c5? a8 40 bb6 a3



Reaching the time control. White is very active and had no doubt relied on her next move, but unfortunately would discover that she is not really attacking the black queen.

41 a6 a2!



As normal for all the leading events at the Saint Louis Chess Club, star interviewer Maurice Ashley, seen here with Kosteniuk, was on hand to run through the key stages of each game.

The a-pawn is quite some asset and suddenly White finds herself very much back on the defensive.

42 ♖e1 ♗b7 43 ♘d2 ♖b8 44 ♗cb6

White would like to keep pieces on, but this was pretty essential to deal with the threat of ...♗b1.

44...exd4 45 exd4 ♗xb6 46 ♗xb6 ♖f4

46...♖a8 47 ♖a1 ♗c8! would have left White horribly tied down and Black with the plan of ...♗h6 and ...f5.

47 ♗a6



47...f5?

The right concept, but not well-timed. Now Black's pride and joy on a2 finds itself being swallowed up. Correct was to first prepare the break with 47...♗e8!: for example, 48 ♖d1 (or 48 d5 ♗xd5) 48...♖e3+ 49 ♗h1 f5 50 e5 ♗b8 followed by ...♗d5 when Black would surely have won. Afterwards Gunina would admit that "My brain just said: 'OK darling, you wanted to play this game, but I don't want to play' and just stopped."

48 d5! fxe4 49 ♗xa2 ♗xd5 50 ♗a7

Black has won a pawn, but at the some cost: a2 has fallen and her e-pawn isn't going anywhere. However, we shouldn't forget that Gunina only needed a draw to clinch the \$40,000 first prize and she now played it safe:

50...♗a8 51 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 52 ♘c4 ♘f6 53 ♗d4 e3! 54 ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 55 ♗xe3 ♗e8 56 g4 ♗g8 57 ♗f2 ♗f7 58 ♗g3 ♘f6 59 ♗c4 ♗d5 60 ♗e5+ ♗e6 61 ♗f4

h6 62 ♗f3 ♗f7 63 ♗b2 g5+ 64 ♗e3 ♗xg4+ 65 hxg4 ♗xf3 66 ♗xf3 ♗g6 ½-½

Valentina Gunina didn't wear her trademark beaming smile quite throughout the whole the Cairns Cup, especially when messing up an exchange-up endgame against Krush, but there could be little doubt that she enjoyed the tournament overall. Her most striking game arguably occurred in the very first round, her most brutal in the fifth.

V.Gunina-B.Khotenashvili Round 1



At first glance the position is quite a mess, but look deeper and you'll see that Black's knight is rather offside, if not trivial to win (...b4 as well as ...♖a3 is a resource), and her d-pawn not going anywhere. What matters most, however, is the lack of a key pawn around the black king. One might now imagine *AlphaZero* calmly going 29 g4, but Gunina elected to strike without delay.

29 ♗h6+! gxh6 30 ♖xf6 ♗d6 31 ♖f3 c6

This won't keep the bishop out of play for long. Black would also have been most unlikely to have survived after 31...♗e6 32 ♗xe6 fxe6 33 ♗e4 ♗g7 34 ♖g4.

32 ♗e8 ♗g6

32...♖d5!? was likely the last chance, angling for a bit of counterplay and to activate the knight after 33 ♖f4 ♗e6

34 ♖b8 ♗xe8 35 ♖xe8 ♗d1.

33 h4 ♖d6 34 ♗c8 ♖d5 35 ♖h3 ♖h5

Now there was nothing wrong with 36 ♗h2 followed by ♗f5, but Gunina was seduced by a brutal idea.

36 g4? ♖d5?

After this the remaining vestiges of Black's position are swept away. 36...f5! 37 ♗f1 fxg4 38 ♖g3 ♖d5 39 ♗g1 should still be somewhat in White's favour, but wouldn't have been so easy to handle.

37 h5 ♗f6



White enjoys open lines towards the black king (the back-rank, the b1-h7 and c1-h6 diagonals). Those who have read *Game Changer* will appreciate Gunina's *AlphaZeroesque* next, sacrificing to push the h-pawn as far as possible and so restrict the black king.

38 g5! hxg5 39 h6 ♖d6

39...♗h7!? might as well have been tried (the prophylactic 39 ♖g4 would have avoided this option), although after 40 ♗xf8 ♖c5 41 ♗d8 ♖xf2+ 42 ♗h1 there's actually nothing great available for Black in view of 42...♗xh6 43 ♗h8+.

40 h7+ ♗h8 41 ♗f5 ♗h6

AlphaZero would surely love White's position: a rook pawn on h7, an active rook and bishop in the vicinity of the black king too, and now the chance to exchange off Black's most active piece.

42 ♖g3! ♖xg3+ 43 fxg3 ♗g7 44 ♗xf8!

Finishing crisply by leaving the h-pawn with the last laugh.

44...♗xf8 45 ♗xg5 ♗h5 46 g4 ♗xg5 47 h8♖+ ♗e7 48 ♗h2 1-0

V.Gunina-M.Sebag Round 5 *Sicilian Najdorf*

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♗b3!?

The latest unexpected sixth move to become trendy against the Najdorf. Now Black has quite a wide choice, with 6...g6 7 ♗e2 ♗g7 8 g4 h6 9 ♗e3 ♗bd7 10 f3 ♖c7 11 ♖d2 b5 12 a3 ♗b8 looking like a decent Dragadorf for him in Maghsoodloo-Kulaots, Moscow 2019, played in the first round of Aeroflot, which turned out to be notable for several reasons – see *Overseas News*.

6...e6 7 g4 b5 8 g5 ♗d7 9 ♗g2 ♗b7



Flanked by Jeanne Sinquefeld on her right and Rex Sinquefeld with an enormous cheque on her left, Valentina Gunina receives first prize at the conclusion to an exciting Cairns Cup.

10 f4 ♖c6 11 h4

Flinging yet another pawn down the board, but Black's Scheveningen set-up is a notoriously tough one to crack.

11...♗b6 12 ♖g4 b4 13 ♘e2 ♖c4 14 0-0 a5 15 c3 e5!



A thematic counterstrike, taking the d4-square away from White and hoping to obtain a powerful initiative after 16 f5? (maintaining the tension with 16 ♖g3 followed by ♘d2 could well be best) 16...♗b6+ 17 ♖h1 a4.

16 fxex5?! dxe5 17 ♖f3 ♖c7

The position is not at all easy to assess or play, but the engines see only positional trumps

for Black after 17...♗b6+!? 18 ♖h1 ♘d8.

18 cxb4 ♗xb4 19 ♖c3!

Played with a cry of "Forwards!".

19...a4 20 ♗b5! ♖d7?

Black's position was precarious in any event, but allowing the white bishop to join the party was not a wise decision. Correct was 20...♗b6+! 21 ♖h2! ♗xb5 22 ♖xf7+ ♗d8 23 g6! h6! (to prevent ♗g5+) 24 ♗xh6! axb3! (yet another exclamation, of course, 24...gxh6? 25 ♖f6+ ♖c7 26 ♖xh8 would not be wise) 25 ♖fd1+ ♖c8 26 ♖ac1.



Here 26...♗c2 (26...♗b8? 27 ♖xc4 gxh6 28 ♖c7 bxa2? 29 ♖dd7 illustrates why the

white king had to evacuate the back rank) 27 axb3 ♗xb3 is indicated to maintain the two extra pieces. The engines initially settle on their favourite '0.00', but I dare say attacking players may enjoy digging deeper, possibly finding more than a draw for White, as with 28 ♖xc2 ♗xc2 29 ♖c1 ♗xc1 30 ♗xc1 ♘d6 31 ♗h3+ ♗b8 32 ♖d7 ♗xe4 33 ♖d8+ ♗a7 34 ♖a5+ ♗b8 35 ♖d8+, etc. Talk about modern chess!

21 ♗h3 ♗xb5

21...♗e7 defends f7, but still leaves Black in huge trouble after the simple 22 ♘d2, and if 22...♗a6 23 ♘xc4 ♗xb5 24 ♗xe5.

22 ♖xf7+ ♗d8 23 g6 h6 24 ♗xh6!



In contrast to the fascinating note to Black's 20th, Sebag's king cannot run to c8 so this sacrifice of the bishop with its first move is essentially a game-ender.

24...gxh6 25 ♖ad1+ ♗d5

25...♗d6 26 g7 ♖e8 27 ♗a5! would be a neat deflection (27 ♖xe8+?? ♖xe8 28 ♖f8 ♗c7 wins), and if 27...♖xa5 28 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29 ♖f8 when Black is up half a chess set and yet must resign.

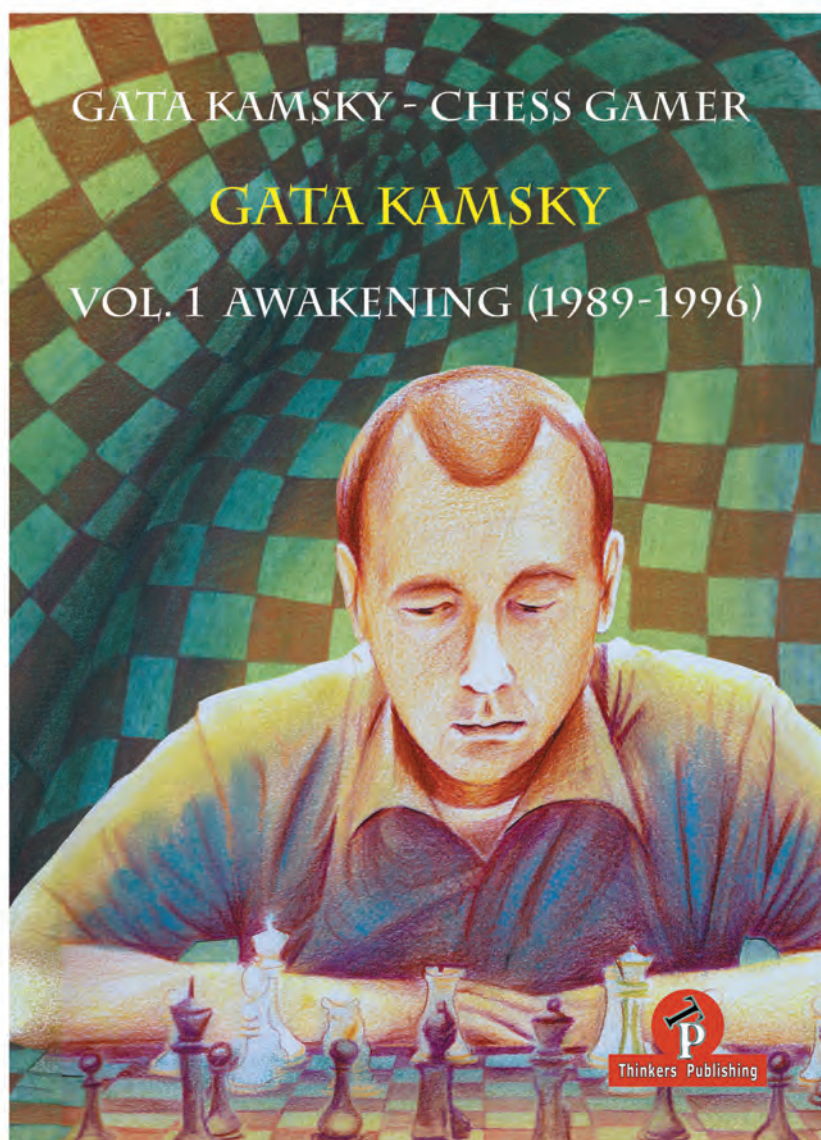
26 g7 ♗xg7 27 ♖xg7 axb3 28 ♖f7 ♖c5+ 29 ♖h2 ♗e8 30 ♖f8+! 1-0

Mate follows on d7.

Not only did the Cairns Cup showcase the best of women's chess in the typically highly professional St. Louis manner to the world (Jennifer Shahade, Maurice Ashley and Yasser Seirawan led the commentary), but the Sinquefelds are also determined to promote it within the U.S., giving \$100,000 to help the USCF "Promote, retain, and encourage girls and women in chess".

1st Cairns Cup, Saint Louis, USA - 5-19 February 2019 (Category 10, average rating = 2478 Elo)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Valentina Gunina	RUS	2501	*	½	½	1	½	½	1	1	1	1	7	2695
2	Alexandra Kosteniuk	RUS	2532	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	6½	2638
3	Irina Krush	USA	2435	½	½	*	1	1	1	1	0	0	½	5½	2562
4	Nana Dzagnidze	GEO	2513	0	½	0	*	½	½	1	1	1	½	5	2517
5	Dronavalli Harika	IND	2471	½	½	0	½	*	1	½	½	½	½	4½	2478
6	Zhansaya Abdumalik	KAZ	2468	½	0	0	½	0	*	1	½	1	1	4½	2479
7	Anna Zatonskih	USA	2428	0	½	0	0	½	0	*	1	1	½	3½	2403
8	Marie Sebag	FRA	2476	0	0	1	0	½	½	0	*	½	½	3	2353
9	Bela Khotenashvili	GEO	2491	0	0	1	0	½	0	0	½	*	1	3	2351
10	Elisabeth Paehtz	GER	2466	0	0	½	½	½	0	½	½	0	*	2½	2313



Gata Kamsky, Gata Kamsky - Chess Gamer Volume 1, Awakening (1989-1996)

ISBN 9789492510280 - 440 pages.

Volume 2, Return - Present (2004-.....). Available Summer 2019.

These two volumes contain the most memorable games of five-time US Champion Gata Kamsky. Volume 1 covers the period before his early retirement. Volume 2 covers the period after his return to the game and will be available in the Summer of 2019.

The annotations are an attempt to search for the truth and reveal the workings of a grand-master's mind. The introductions are designed to show the reader what he thought, felt and experienced at the time and during each game. In addition, he sometimes share his personal opinions on things like politics and his philosophy of life.

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How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King



This is one of the best – and bravest – checkmating attacks I have seen for some time. The winner is Lucas van Foreest who will have just turned 18 years old by the time this article is published. It was played in the tough Tata Steel Challengers group back in January. Van Foreest scored 6/13, but actually gained rating points with this performance.

The van Foreest family has a formidable reputation on the chessboard. Lucas's brother, Jorden, was playing in the top Tata Steel tournament; and their younger sister Machteld became the first girl to win the Dutch Under-12 championship in 2017. This talent does not come from nothing: at the end of the 19th century, their great-great grandfather, Arnold, was three-time Dutch champion, and his brother Dirk was also a three-time Dutch champion.

Lucas's opponent in this game is Evgeny Bareev, who enjoyed a distinguished chess career in the 1990s and 2000s, but doesn't play that much these days. He has transferred his federation from the Russian to the Canadian, where he works as a coach for the national team and with aspiring juniors. Bareev is a refined positional player, very much in the formal Russian tradition, so I can imagine he was shocked by the brutality of White's attack.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The

article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

L. Van Foreest–E. Bareev

Wijk aan Zee 2019

Caro–Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♖d3 ♘c6 5 c3 ♘f6 6 ♗f4 ♗g4 7 ♖b3 ♗d7 8 ♘d2 e6 9 ♘gf3 ♗d6 10 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 11 0-0 0-0



12 ♖fe1

Three points. The rook belongs on the semi-open file in this kind of position. The only question is: which rook? Using the king's rook is strategically flexible, as the queen's rook could be employed anywhere along the first rank – even where it is standing right now.

Then again, 12 ♖a1 (*three points*) would send a strong message to your opponent that every single piece is heading over to attack the king. Besides, the king's rook could well be useful in supporting the advance of the f-pawn, as here: 12... ♖ab8 13 ♖e5 ♗h5 14 f4, Weeramantry–Walton, Somerset 1986.

12 ♗xb7 (*one point*) isn't really in the spirit of the position, but is playable: 12... ♖ab8 13 ♗a6 ♖b6 (13... ♗xb2? would be met by 14 ♗b5) 14 ♗a3 ♗xa3 15 bxa3 ♖c8. White's pawns are ugly, but he does have one more than Black. Objectively, it's about level. Many moons ago I used to flirt occasionally with the Caro–Kann, and to my surprise found myself in this very position, trying to play for a win with Black against a somewhat weaker opponent who was obviously content with a draw. Not an easy task – but virtue had its reward.

12... ♗c7

Let me show you two alternatives where the queen's rook can come in to play:

a) Anand–Mamedyarov, Saint Louis (blitz) 2018, continued: 12... ♖e7 13 ♖e5 ♗f5 14 ♗f1 ♖ab8 15 a4 ♖e4 16 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 17 a5...and was drawn after 45 moves.

b) Woong–Diaz, London 2018, saw instead 12... ♖ab8 13 ♖e5 b5, and here 14 ♗xb5! would have given White a clear advantage, as 14... a6 15 ♗xc6 ♖xb3 16 axb3 followed by ♖xa6 is tremendous. Black's queen has nothing to attack.

13 ♖e5

Three points. Van Foreest continues in the traditional way, but it was also possible to gain space on the queenside à la Vishy: 13 a4 (*three points*) 13... ♖fc8 14 ♗a3 ♖e7 15 ♖e5 ♗f5 16 a5 ♗xd3 17 ♖xd3. White's position is rock solid, Mons–Svane, German Bundesliga 2018.

13 ♖e3 (*two points*) feels a little premature considering that the knight hasn't moved from f3, but it's not bad.

I don't see the point of playing 13 h3 – it only pushes the bishop on its journey to g6 (via 13... ♗h5).

13... ♗h5



Incidentally, how would you recapture after 13... ♖xe5? I'm not setting this as a question, because I don't think there is much in it, however, I know what I would favour: 14 ♖xe5. The problem with the alternative, 14 dxe5 ♖d7, is that Black can often use the a7–g1 diagonal for counterplay, and the knight looks good on c5.

14 f4

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Three points. The boldest move in the position. After this White doesn't need to fear the exchange on e5 as he can recapture with the f-pawn, maintaining a solid structure from the queenside through the middle of the board.

14 ♞df3 (*three points*) is a decent option, supporting the knight in the middle and also clearing the path for White's queen to move to the kingside via c2 and d2. One could also argue that this is a more prudent way of attacking as White's king is safer with the pawn on f2.

14 h3 was played in a game a couple of weeks after this one. Pinto-Svane, Gibraltar 2019, continued: 14... ♞fc8 15 a4 ♞ab8 16 ♞a3 ♞xe5 17 ♞xe5 ♟g6 18 ♟xg6 hxg6 19 a5. Interesting! Please see the note to White's 13th move above. This is the second time that the German Grandmaster Rasmus Svane has faced this strategy, and it is very different to the game. White is seeking to contain on the queenside, but there is no real pressure on Black's position. This unambitious strategy finally led to defeat.

14 ♞xc6 (no credit) I do not like at all. 14...bxc6 is the best recapture. Why exchange off the beautiful knight and strengthen Black's centre?

14... ♟g6

15 ♟xg6

Four points. This is a really hard decision. One part of me wants to keep that fantastic bishop on d3, another looks at that magnificent beast on the outpost and says – it's got to stay there.

In fact, after 15 ♟xg6 hxg6, it's not easy to press forward on the kingside – which is really what should be happening if f2-f4 has been played. For a start, the f-pawn needs defending which slows down any potential attack; and the pawn structure, g6, g7, f7 and e6 successfully shuts out the bishop. Black's counterplay with ...b5 will arrive quickly.

15...hxg6

Taking towards the centre is positionally correct, but fraught with danger for the king. The alternative, 15...fxg6, would consign Black to a grim defence considering the weakness of the e-pawn and White's grip on the e5 square. 16 ♞d3 would get things off to a good start, protecting the f-pawn and preparing to double on the e-file.

16 ♞e3

Three points. The attack starts to take shape. There were plenty of alternatives.

16 ♞b5 (*three points*) looks odd, but the queen is en route to a better square which happens after 16...a6 17 ♞d3 .

16 ♞d1 (*three points*) has the same object – get her to the kingside.

Be careful about the e4-square. If 16 ♞df3 Black's knight hops in: 16... ♞e4 .

I don't like procrastinating with 16 a4 or 16 a3 – it just gives Black something to aim at and a move more for his counterattack.

16... ♞fc8



18-year-old Lucas van Foreest finished on 6/13 in the strong Challengers Group at Wijk aan Zee, but did win a brutal and fearless attacking game against Russian legend, Evgeny Bareev. Lucas is now rated 2515; his year-older brother and fellow Dutch hope Jorden is rated 2621.

If Black wants to take the heat out of the position, then 16... ♞b6 is worth considering: 17 ♞xb6 axb6 18 a3 is optically better for White, but breaking through is very difficult. By the way, avoiding the queen exchange with 17 ♞c2 is awkward: 17... ♞fc8 , and the queen has to drop to b1. Not ideal.

17 ♞d1

Three points. The queen has served its purpose on the queenside and needs to find more fruitful fields. It really was high time. If instead 17 ♞h3 , then 17... ♞b6 will probably reach the endgame that I mentioned above, as 18 ♞a3 is a bit desperate.

17 a4 (*one point*) is playable, with the idea that the queen will be able to hide after 17... ♞b6 18 ♞a3 , but it still feels like the queen is miles away from where it really ought to be – the kingside.



White faces the age-old dilemma: what should be done about the minority attack? Ignore it? Or halt it?

18 ♞e1

Two points. Ignorance is bliss. The queen continues the journey to the danger zone.

Halting the advance with 18 b4 is definitely a mistake, allowing Black to engage on the queenside and in so doing distract White from the kingside attack: 18...a5 19 a3 axb4 20 axb4 ♖e4 21 ♖xe4 dxe4 22 ♖xe4 ♖xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♗xc3 is tremendous – this is the point when White regrets throwing the f-pawn up the board. White doesn't have to take on e4, but in any case, the pawn structure is a wreck, and the split rooks mean that he will have to cede control of the a-file.

18 a3 a5 doesn't make matters any better.

18 ♖b3 would be met by 18...♖e4, and White's knight is not in time to get to c5. Likewise, 18 ♖df3 allows 18...♖e4 and White's attack is not going to get through.

18...b4

19 ♖h3

Two points. This could also have been played on the previous turn. *Balance your score* if you went for it then.

19 ♖h4 (*one point*) is also good.

19...bxc3

20 bxc3

One point. 20 ♖h4 (*one point*) is also strong.

20...♗e7



21 ♖xc6

Five points. Exchanging off the beautiful knight on e5 is counter-intuitive, but there is a very definite reason behind it.

The more natural 21 ♖h4 (*two points*) allows Black to push away the queen with 21...♖h5 22 ♖f2 ♖xe5 23 fxe5 ♖ab8, with counterplay.

21...♖xc6

22 ♖h4

One point. As the queen on e7 is no longer defended, Black is unable to prevent the invasion on the h-file.

22...♖f8

23 ♖h8+

One point.

23...♖g8



24 ♖h7

Two points.

24...f6

Before you move on to the game continuation, what about 24...♗f6? How would you crack Black's defence? Answer on the next line.

First of all, let's put the knight on e5: 25 ♖f3 ♖xc3 26 ♖e5 (threatening a check on d7) 26...♖d8 27 ♖f1 (protecting f4) 27...♖c2, and now the final straw: 28 g4, threatening g5, pushing the queen away from protecting g7. *Five bonus points* if you got this far. White needs to be brave to play like this – one slip and his king gets cut to pieces, but White's attack gets in first.

I can understand why Bareev might have believed that his defence was still holding firm. White's queen and rook appear to be rammed at the end of a cul-de-sac with no chance of breaking through to the king. But there is a way in.

25 ♖f3

Four points. Defending the c-pawn with either 25 ♖c1 or 25 ♖h3 would be utterly hopeless. The motto has to be: 'Go hard, or go home'.

25...♖xc3



26 ♖e5

Six points. Instead 26 ♖h4? ♗f7 defends. With the knight on e5, the queen cannot defend the g6-pawn from f7, and if 26...♗e8 27 ♗xg7 mate. In other words, Black has to capture the knight.

White could also play 26 ♖f1 (*two points*), threatening ♖e5, but after 26...♖xf3! 27 ♖xf3 ♖b8 breaking through is still not easy.

26...fxe5

27 fxe5

One point. Threatening ♖f1+. There is only one possible defence.

27...♖f3

Black has to block the f-file. If 27...♖ac8 28 ♖f1+ ♖e8 29 ♖xg7 wins.

28 gxf3

One point. That has to be taken.

28...♖b8



29 f4

Three points. An extraordinary move, maintaining the attack with a lone pawn. Because Black is tied to defending the g7-pawn he cannot organise a counterattack against White's king.

29 ♖h1 (*three points*) is also a good try.

29...♖c7

Instead of this, how would you respond to 29...♖b2? Answer on the next line.

30 ♖c1 (*two points*) is the best move, threatening a check on the eighth rank, and forcing the rook to retreat. This is exactly why Black played as he did in the game.

30 f5

Four points. Forcing open lines. White had to keep going. Instead, 30 ♖h1 would be too slow: 30...♖b7 defends the g7-pawn and on the next turn the queen flies down the c-file into the attack. When advancing pawns in front of one's own king, this will always be the danger: if the initiative is lost, your opponent will have every chance of a successful counterattack.

Incidentally, Black does not have time to play 30...♖b7 after the game move: 31 fxe6 and ♖f1+ decides the game with checks.

As an alternative to the game, 30 ♖h3 (*one point*) abandons the attack, but at least brings the queen and rook back from exile. Black has sufficient activity to compensate for the exchange: 30...♖c4 31 ♖d1 ♖c2 32 ♖f1 ♖e4 33 ♖h4 ♖b2 34 ♖g4 ♗xd4+, and the fight continues. With the king on f7 and knight on e7 Black's king is secure – contrast with White's.

30...exf5

Instead, how would you respond to 30...gxf5 (see diagram)? Precision required!



White gets there just in time with 31 ♖h1 ♙b7 32 ♙g1 (two points if you got this far) 32...♙c2 33 ♙hxg7 ♙e4+ 34 ♙g2, securing the king, with the unstoppable threat of ♙xg8+ at the other end of the board. Two more points if you reached here.

31 ♙e1

Five points. The passed e-pawn gives White's attack extra impetus, but great care is still needed to put the game away.

31 e6 would be a mistake: 31...♙e8! 32 ♙e1 ♙xe6 33 ♙xe6 ♙c1+ and White's king will not escape the perpetual. With the queen and rook at the other end of the board, it shouldn't be a surprise.

31...♙b7

Danger – the g7-pawn has been overprotected and Black's queen is ready to rampage.

32 ♙h3

Four points. Just in time to prevent the incursion. Instead, 32 e6 would lead to a draw as in the variation above: 32...♙c3 33 e7+ ♙xe7! 34 ♙xe7 ♙xd4+ 35 ♙f1 ♙f4+ and eventually a draw by perpetual check.

32...♙a5

33 ♙h4

Three points. Defending and attacking simultaneously. Black's queen cannot move away from protecting d8 (or ♙d8+ and e6 mate), so the counterattack is nipped in the bud.

33...♙e7



34 e6

Three points. Setting up the threat of ♙h8+ and e7+.

34...♙d2

35 ♙b3

Five points. Just when it seemed that Black is back in the game, White lands a knockout punch. Black resigned (1-0). If 35...♙xb3 36 ♙h8+ ♙g8 37 e7+ ♙e8 38 ♙xg8+, etc, or 35...♙c7 36 ♙b8+ ♙c8 37 ♙xc8+ ♙xc8 38 ♙d8 checkmate.

This was an exceptionally difficult game and I am full of admiration for the enterprising spirit in which van Foreest played. Embarking on the continuation with the queen and rook stuck on h8 and h7 would have taken enormous bravery considering how for a few moves this advanced guard was effectively cut off from the rest of its army. It would be interesting to know exactly when he realised that there was a way to rekindle the fire of the attack.

Now add up your points:

0-21	Unlucky
22-42	Average Club Player
43-50	Strong Club Player
51-58	FIDE Master
59-66	International Master
67-83	Grandmaster

Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.



Forthcoming Events

April 4-7 English Seniors Championships, Solihull
www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships/

April 4 Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz
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April 5-7 Edinburgh Congress
www.chessedinburgh.co.uk/edincongress.php or call 0131 334 1062

April 6 Teignmouth Rapidplay
www.teignmouthchessclub.com

April 7 Chester Centenary Rapidplay
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April 13-14 4NCL (Divisions 3 and 4 South), Daventry
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

April 13 Poplar Rapidplay
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April 16-18 Midland Open Junior Champs, Leicester
www.mccu.org.uk

April 17-22 Irish International Open, Dublin
www.icu.ie/events/1067

April 18-22 Southend Easter Congress
www.southendchesscongress.org.uk

April 19-22 4NCL Easter Congress, Stevenage
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

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Mar 30 – Apr 9 Gashimov Memorial, Shamkir
shamkirchess.com; Anand, Carlsen, Ding Liren, Mamedyarov, etc.

April 8-16 Reykjavik Open
www.reykjavikopen.com; Grandelius, Jones, L'Ami, Maghsoodloo, etc.

Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

Not as Solid as a Rock



More of the most exciting and instructive games from Gibraltar

The Gibraltar International Chess Festival, as we reported on last month, once again saw a great amount of fighting chess and some highly instructive encounters; the former typified by the game which would go on to see its two combatants share the best game prize.

G.Jones-A.Ramirez

Round 4

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜d7 5 ♜f3 ♜gf6 6 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 7 g3 b6 8 ♜b5+!?

A modern wrinkle, aiming to drag Black's bishop offside, and one recommended in John Shaw's recent *Playing 1.e4 – French Defence and Sicilian Sidelines*.

8...♜d7 9 a4 a6 10 ♜e2 ♜c6 11 0-0 ♜d7!?

A novelty. 11...♜d6 12 ♜e5 ♜xe5 13 dxe5 ♜d7 14 ♜d4 had given White an edge in Jones-Hawkins, British Championship, Hull 2018.

12 ♜c4!?

Yet another bishop move, but Jones has a brutal idea in mind.

12...♜e7 13 d5 exd5



14 ♜d4!

The second consecutive blow, whereas 14 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 15 ♜xd5 0-0 would most likely have led to a draw.

14...♜b7 15 ♜f5!?

An essential follow-up and by now both players were burning up the clock in what is a highly unclear scenario, if also one typically assessed as '0.00' by the silicon monster.

15...dxc4

The American Grandmaster and commentator decides that the proof must lie in the eating. 15...♜f6 16 ♜xd5 (or 16 ♜e1+ ♜e5 17 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 18 f4 0-0 19 fxe5 ♜e7 20 ♜g4 ♜c5+ 21 ♜e3 g6) 16...♜xd5 17 ♜xd5 ♜e5 18 ♜e3 0-0 was a solid alternative.

16 ♜xg7+ ♜f8 17 ♜h6 ♜g8

Likely the only move considered by both players, but the silicon points out the incredible 17...♜e5!? 18 ♜e6+ ♜e8 19 ♜xd8 ♜f3+ 20 ♜h1 ♜xd8 21 ♜c1 when 21...♜d5 22 ♜g2 ♜h5 23 h3 ♜h4+ would result in perpetual check.

18 ♜e1!?

Continuing to roll the dice rather than bail out with 18 ♜e6 fxe6 19 ♜g4+ ♜f7 20 ♜h5+ ♜g8 21 ♜g4+, etc.

18...♜f8!

Black defends well, side-stepping the scary-looking 18...♜f6 19 ♜f5 (19 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 20 ♜e5 is also possible) 19...♜f8 20 ♜c1, although 20...♜g4 21 ♜e8! ♜f6! should then be fine for him in view of 22 ♜e7+ ♜xe7 23 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 24 ♜f4 ♜xh6 25 ♜xc7 ♜f6.

19 ♜e8

The point of White's play, and not 19 ♜g4? ♜f6 20 ♜g5 ♜d5.

19...♜f6 20 ♜xd7



20...♜xe8

Now it's Ramirez's turn to play on, rather than repeat moves with 20...♜f3 21 ♜f1 ♜h1+ 22 ♜e2 ♜f3+, or 20...♜xh6 21 ♜f5 ♜h5 22 ♜e7+ ♜g7 23 ♜f5+ ♜g8, if not here 23...♜g6? 24 ♜e6+! fxe6 25 ♜xe6+ ♜g5 26 f4+ ♜g4 27 ♜d4+.

21 ♜xe8 ♜xh6 22 ♜g4+ ♜g6

Finally acquiescing to the draw. Your engine

may well be screaming that 22...♜g7 wins, but look at the position after 23 ♜d1 ♜g6 24 ♜d8!, threatening mate. Would you really have risked this as Black? Admittedly after 24...♜xb2 Black does seem to be somewhat better, but over the board anything might well have happened.

23 ♜f6+ ♜g7 24 ♜e8+ ♜g8

Note that 24...♜h6? 25 ♜h4+ ♜h5 26 ♜f6+ ♜g6 27 ♜xh8 ♜e4 (or 27...♜c6 28 ♜f6+) would be far too ambitious, in view of 28 ♜xf8+ ♜g6 29 ♜g7+ ♜f5 30 ♜xf7+ and it's Black who will be mated.

25 ♜f6+ ♜g7 26 ♜e8+ ♜g8 27 ♜f6+ ♜g7 ½-½

Elsewhere the early rounds saw a positional tour de force from the Iranian sensation of the first half of Gibraltar, Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, and a fighting win with the Hedgehog by the eventual outright second, Murali Karthikeyan.

S.Khademalsharieh-A.Donchenko

Round 3

Modern Benoni

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 ♜c3 exd5 6 cxd5 g6 7 ♜d2 ♜bd7 8 e4 ♜g7 9 ♜e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♜e8 11 a4 ♜e5 12 ♜c2 a6 13 ♜a3 ♜g4 14 ♜xg4 ♜fxg4 15 h3 ♜f6 16 a5 ♜e7 17 ♜a4 ♜ed7

17...♜ad8 followed by ...♜h5 or even ...g5 would restrict White to an edge. The plan to exchange the light-squared bishops was unusually likely not a great one.

18 ♜c3 ♜e5 19 ♜a4 ♜ed7 20 ♜c3 ♜ac8 21 ♜c4 ♜e5 22 ♜b6 ♜c7 23 ♜g5 h6



Thus far Black has been outplayed and now rather than retain control, the Iranian IM might have cashed in her advantages with 24 ♖xf6!, and if 24...♙xf6 (or 24...♜xf6 when White crashes through in thematic fashion: 25 f4 ♘d7 26 e5 dxe5 27 ♗e4 ♜d8 28 f5) 25 f4 ♘d7 26 e5! dxe5? 27 ♗e4 and Black is losing material. **24 ♖h4 c4?! 25 ♜a4 ♗e7 26 ♗xc4 ♜ec8 27 ♗b6 ♗xb6 28 axb6 ♜c5 29 f4**



Black has little for his pawn, so White is able to achieve her ideal central expansion.

29...♜e8?

29...♜e8 was grim, but fairly essential.

30 e5! dxe5 31 fxe5 ♜xe5 32 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 33 ♜f2

The German Grandmaster had evidently overlooked this game-ending fork.

33...♖g5 34 ♜e4

Or just 34 ♜xf7+ ♖h8 35 ♜e4.

34...♖e3 35 ♜xe3 ♜xc3 36 ♜f2 ♜xe4 37 ♜xf7+ ♖h8 38 bxc3 ♜e7 39 ♜f8+ ♖h7 40 ♜f7+ ♜xf7 41 ♜xf7+ ♖h8 42 d6 ♜e1+ 43 ♜f1 ♜xc3 44 ♜f8+ ♖h7 45 ♜e7+ ♖g8 46 ♜d8+ 1-0



Impressively Iranian IM and WGM Sarasadat Khademalsharieh crushed Donchenko and drew with Aronian and Adhiban on the Rock.

D.Cornette-M.Karthikeyan

Round 4

Sicilian Taimanov

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 a6 5 c4 ♗f6 6 ♗c3 ♜c7 7 ♖e2 ♖b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖g5 ♖e7 10 ♜d2 d6 11 ♜ac1 ♗bd7 12 ♜fd1 b6 13 f3 ♖b7 14 ♖f1 ♜ac8 15 ♖e3 ♜b8 16 ♜f2 ♜fe8 17 ♖h1

Not a great amount has happened so far. Bobby Fischer used to like a plan of ...♖h8 and ...g5 in such positions; Karthikeyan prefers another ambitious advance.

17...h5!? 18 ♜d2

18 ♗a4?! might seem more consistent with White's approach thus far, but then Black has 18...d5, and if 19 cxd5 exd5 20 ♗f5 ♖f8 with strong central counterplay. 18 b4 ♗e5 19 ♗a4 ♖d8 also feels OK for Black, but at some stage White might like to find an active plan.

18...h4



19 h3

The Lithuanian IM and wife of fellow Celtic Tigers player Matthieu Cornette was no doubt concerned about such possibilities as 19 b3 ♗e5 20 ♖g5 h3 21 g3 b5! when White begins to look quite vulnerable on the long diagonal, as shown by 22 cxb5? ♜xc3! 23 ♜xc3 ♗xf3! 24 ♜xf3 ♗xe4 when Black will do far more than just regain the rook. However, weakening the g3-square is a big price to pay to rule out ...h3. As such, something like 19 ♖e2!? was possibly better, and if 19...h3 20 g4 ♗e5 21 g5 ♗h7 22 ♜g1!? when Black might yet regret his h-pawn charge.

19...h5 20 ♗ce2 ♗e5 21 b3

Everything is defended for now, but White continues to lack an active plan, whereas Black can probe on the kingside dark squares and also look to get in ...d5.

21...h6! 22 ♖g1 ♖f8 23 ♗c3 d5!

If this advance is playable in a Hedgehog structure, it should usually be played.

24 cxd5 exd5 25 ♗xd5

25 exd5 ♖b4 26 ♗de2 ♜cd8 also looks like just the sort of position White could quickly lose control in.

25...♜xc1 26 ♜xc1 ♖xd5 27 exd5 ♖d6!?



Rolling the dice. Thus far Cornette has defended pretty well and after 27...♜e5 she might well have opted for 28 ♜e1 ♖d6 29 f4! ♜xd5 30 ♗f3 when White should be OK.

28 ♗f5!

Taking up the challenge...

28...h2+ 29 ♖f2?

...only then to falter. 29 ♖h1 was necessary and after 29...♗e7 30 ♗xe7+ ♜xe7 31 f4! ♜xe3!? 32 ♖xh2! ♜xf4+ 33 ♖g1 Black comes up somewhat short. As such, objectively Karthikeyan's 27...♖d6 was a mistake, but sometimes in Open tournaments you have to roll the dice, especially when the opponent is low on time.

29...♜e5

A powerful location for the queen as Black's pieces dominate the key parts of the battleground.

30 ♖d3

Or if 30 ♗d4? ♗gf4 and White is undone on the dark squares.

30...h3 31 ♖d4

31 ♗xg3 ♖xg3+ 32 ♖e2 ♗f4+ is the problem, as once again the bishop on e3 costs White the game. As such, 31 ♗d4 ♗f4 32 ♗c2 is suggested by the engines, but after 32...h3! the black attack appears a decisive one, and if 33 ♖xe2 ♜g5 34 ♖f1? ♜g3#.

31...♜xd5 32 ♖e4 ♜xe4!

A small combination to nicely conclude proceedings, Karthikeyan having spotted that White's counter combination will not quite prevail.

33 ♜c8+ ♖h7 34 ♜h8+! ♗xh8! 0-1

In amongst such struggles initially marked by their manoeuvring, our sometime contributor, IM John Pigott, scored a devastating, quick win with the Pirc.

D.Gavrilescu-J.Pigott

Round 8

Pirc Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 ♖e3 c6 5 ♜d2 b5 6 f3

The battle lines are already drawn. Such an aggressive set-up against the Pirc has been debated since the 1960s – the line became fairly well-known in the UK in the 70s and

80s – and the jury is still out as to whether White's aggressive posturing promises him any advantage.

6...♙g7 7 0-0-0 ♖a5 8 ♙b1 ♜bd7

Pirc aficionados should take note of Black's move order.

7 g4

This cannot be bad, but if White wants to trade the dark-squared bishops he should likely begin with 9 ♙h6, and if 9...♙xh6 10 ♖xh6 b4 (as in the game, 10...♙b6!? could be more critical) 11 ♜ce2 c5 12 ♜h3, which seemed to slightly favour him in Almasi-Kobo, Douglas 2018.

9...♙b6 10 ♙h6?

By now White needed to be thinking about defence on the queenside, as with 10 ♙d3 ♙e6 (perhaps Black can even consider 10...b4 11 ♜ce2 c5 12 dxc5 ♙a4!, as well as 10...h5!?) 11 b3 and then 12 ♜ce2, or even 10 a3, hoping for 10...b4? (10...♙b8 11 ♜ce2 ♖a6 should be preferred) 11 ♙a2.

10...♙xh6 11 ♖xh6 ♙e6!



Delightfully crude and also extremely strong. The young, strong Romanian FM (already rated 2479) was perhaps relying on his next, but John Pigott has realised that Black need not fear moving his king within the centre.

12 d5 cxd5

12...b4!? might have been even stronger, and if 13 ♙b5 (trying to keep lines closed) 13...cxd5! 14 ♜c7+ ♙d7 15 ♜xe6 (15 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 would but be a very strong attack for Black) 15...fxe6 with a messy position where Black ought to be doing fairly well.

13 ♙xb5+ ♙d8?!

Black had presumably prepared this in advance. 13...♙d7 14 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 was also possible and likely stronger.

14 ♜ge2 dxe4 15 ♖g5

The initiative is all-important in such positions, so White needed to activate another piece with 15 ♙d4! when 15...♖c8 16 ♜xe6+ fxe6 17 ♖g7 ♖g8 18 ♖xd6+! exd6 19 ♖xf6+ ♙c7 20 fxe4 gives him at least enough for the exchange.

15...♙bd5

Trying to overload White's queenside pieces, but the fearless silicon prefers 15...h6!, auguring that White hasn't enough for the exchange after the calm 16 ♖xd6+!? (16 ♖f4 ♙bd5 17 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 is excellent for Black, even after 18 ♖xe4 ♖xb5 19 c4 ♖b4



IM John Pigott is a fine strategical player, but can also attack – and with great verve at times.

20 cxd5 ♖xe4+ 21 fxe4 ♙xg4, and 16 ♖d2? ♙xa2+! no improvement either for White)

16...♙bd7! 17 ♖xd7+ ♙xd7 18 ♖d2 ♙e8.

16 fxe4 h6



Better late than never. Now the queen had to go to h4. Can you see why?

17 ♖d2? ♙xc3+ 18 ♖xc3

Or 18 ♙xc3 ♙xe4 and – splat! Black either mates or wins a piece and the game with 19 ♖d4 ♙xc3+ 20 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 21 bxc3 ♖b8.

18...♖xa2+ 19 ♙c1 ♖a1+ 20 ♙d2 ♙xe4+ 21 ♙e3 ♙xc3 22 ♖xa1 ♙xb5 0-1

There goes a piece.

To win any tournament, one tends to require a dose of fortune. In the fifth round on the Rock it was the turn of the man who would go on to dominate proceedings, Vladislav Artemiev, to enjoy the favours of Caissa. The rising Russian star would go on to close out the tournament, and in some style. We saw how he outplayed Hikaru Nakamura last month; his victory over David Navara was also pretty impressive.



White is two pawns up, but under pressure. Now 25 ♖e1 ♙xd4 26 ♙e3 would have been sensible enough, but there's nothing wrong with allowing the minor pieces to be forked.

25 ♙f4 g5 26 ♖c1 ♖b2

All good so far for White, but now he saw a combinational idea which was to contain a fatal flaw. Have you spotted it yet?

27 ♙e3??

27 ♖e1 gxf4 28 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 29 ♖xe4 fxc3 would highly likely have resulted in a draw.

27...gxh4 28 ♖xe4

The point of White's play.

28...♖xe4 0-1

Oops! 29 ♖c8+ ♙f8 30 ♙h6 ♖xa3 covers the back rank and leaves Black a rook ahead.

V.Artemiev-D.Navara

Round 9

Reti Opening

1 ♙f3 ♙f6 2 g3 g6 3 b3 d5 4 ♙b2 c5 5 ♙g2 ♙g7 6 c4 d4

A reversed Benoni structure, which now actually becomes a rare line of the Benko, White accepting a loss of tempo to insist on opening queenside lines.

7 b4!? 0-0 8 bxc5 ♙e4 9 0-0 ♙xc5

R.Jumabayev-V.Artemiev

Round 5



Vladislav Artemiev receives the victor's trophy at Gibraltar's glitzy closing ceremony. He would go on to score a crucial $6\frac{1}{2}/8$ and win double gold on bottom board for Russia in Astana.

10 d3 e5

With his king's knight already on the ideal c5-square, eyeing the queenside, still controlling e4 and staying out of the way of the f-pawn, Black must be fine, albeit with a rich manoeuvring struggle lying ahead.

11 ♖a3 ♜ba6 12 ♜fd2 ♜e8 13 ♜e4 ♜f8
14 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 15 ♜d2 ♜b8 16 ♜b1 b6



17 ♜xc5!?

The first of two big decisions – decisions with which White will turn the position from comfortable for Black into a rather unbalanced scenario. This first exchange isn't engine-approved, but regaining full control over the e4-square makes sense, at least so long as White can find an active follow-up of his own.

17... ♜xc5 18 ♜a4 ♜g4 19 ♜f3 ♜h3
20 ♜xa7!

Rather than repeat moves with the bishops, Artemiev finds the aforementioned active plan, albeit at the cost of the exchange.

20... ♜xf1 21 ♜xf1 ♜e7 22 ♜a4 ♜d7
23 ♜b5 ♜a7

23...f5!? 24 ♜b3 ♜f8 25 ♜g2 ♜d6 was possible too, when White should be able to prevent Black from crashing through with ...e5-e4.

24 ♜b3 ♜g2 25 a4



25... ♜a8?

A lack of counterplay and being stuck in a bind can cause even strong players to make a misguided bid for freedom. Black should have preferred 25... ♜ee8, reconnecting his rooks and being happy to mark time if needed, while challenging White to come up with a good plan. After, say, 26 ♜e4 ♜f8 27 g4!? h6 28 h4 White retains full compensation for the exchange, but increasing the pressure further will not be at all easy.

26 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 27 f3 ♜a7

It's not impossible that the Czech no.1 had thought he had time to keep the white knight at bay with 27...f5?, only to then spot 28 a5! with which White crashes through.

28 ♜e4 ♜xa4 29 ♜xc5 bxc5 30 ♜xc5
♜a3 31 ♜b4 ♜a4 32 ♜b6 ♜a1+ 33 ♜f2
e4!?

A desperate try, in view of 33... ♜h1 34 ♜a5 ♜c8 35 ♜g2, and one hoping for 34 dxe4? ♜a3 when White will be unable to escape the perpetual.

34 ♜d5 e3+ 35 ♜g2 ♜a7 36 ♜xa7 ♜xa7
37 f4 1-0

Fittingly for a Reti, the game ends with Black's centre crumbling.



A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

FIDE - @FIDE_chess

The match had a worrisome start for England, since Speelman was lost straight out of the opening. But then Adams, McShane, and Howell grabbed the full point and put the final score on 3-1 against Iran.

Liang Ziming - @sinotahl

China women team, with absence of Hou Yifan and Ju Wenjun, beat top seed Russia by 2.5 - 1.5! #WTCC2019

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen

Congrats to Kaido Kulaots for an absolutely amazing underdog victory at the Aeroflot open! 19 years ago, he shared a flat with my father and I at the Gausdal tournament, and inspired an unrated 9 year old by predicting that he would one day be rated 2650.

Sam Shankland - @GMShanky

Age is just a number, and rating is just a number. Congrats to Kaido Kulaots (42 y/o, 2542 FIDE) on the biggest upset tournament win I have ever seen! Winning the Aeroflot A group as the 62nd seed ahead of 6 x 2700+ guys is no joke.

2700chess - @2700chess

Rating Inflation? There are 37 players only (including retired Kramnik) above 2700+ for the first time since 2700chess was launched in 2011. Also, Adams has dropped below 2700 for the first time since July 2010. Ivanchuk and Gelfand have also fallen below 2700.

Simon Williams - @ginger_gm

Day off at @bataviachess @cafebatavia1920 so had to pop into The Doors cafe. First visited about twenty years ago! Remember the spider @simon_ansell @IMAdamHunt!?

John Saunders - @johnchess

@GMGawain won the King's Head blitz #chess despite a defeat by Mike Healey in the prelim. An unusual crosstable: Mike is the Robin Hood of chess - he takes points from the rich in rating and donates them to the poor.

Nigel Short - @nigelshortchess

Quiet before a 23 board simul and the official launch of the Saint Kitts and Nevis Chess Federation in Bank Street, #Basseterre. #FIDE Expansion Tour.

Judit Polgar - @GMJuditPolgar

Did you know that there is a 2Euro coin with Paul Keres on it? #chess #PaulKeres #Euro

The Path to the Top

Qualifying for the Championship Pool is the aspiration of every first division team in the 4NCL. While Pool A went with seeding this season, Pool B was more lively

Weekends Three and Four of the 4NCL saw the top two divisions in Telford. Whilst everything was very efficiently run, as ever, by the 4NCL's team of arbiters and officials, it was perhaps regrettable quite how many players couldn't be accommodated at the venue or at a nearby hotel, but were instead placed a 20-minute walk away in slightly cheaper university accommodation.

That came after problems with the agreed bedroom allocation for the 4NCL and with other events elsewhere in Telford filling up the town's hotels. We are pleased, though, to report that the 4NCL will no longer be using this particular venue next season.

Pool A – All to Seeding

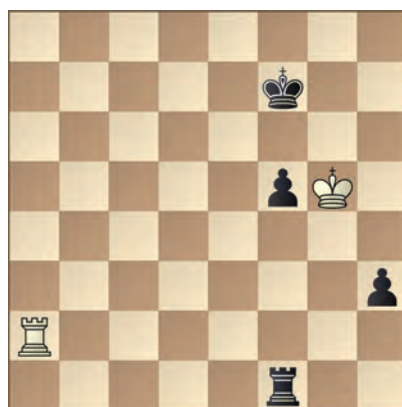
The 4NCL certainly got its seeding right in Pool A of Division One as, unfortunately for fans of the underdog, the top four teams didn't drop a single point against unseeded opposition. That meant Guildford, Wood Green, Barbican and White Rose all secured fairly comfortable qualification to the Championship Pool, and with a round to spare.

Reaching 4/4 did not mean that Roger Emerson or his record-breaking Guildford troops would take their foot off the gas; if anything the opposite being true. They demolished West is Best 7½-½ in round 5, despite Matthew Sadler being held in a sharp encounter by FM loan Rees on top board, pulled away late in the day to beat White Rose in round 6, and then conceded just the one draw against North East England.

With five games still in play and far from over at the five-hour mark, White Rose might have hoped to achieve a respectable score against the champions, but it wasn't to be. Luke McShane held on against Catalan GM Daniel Alsina Leal, while Gawain Jones and Romain Edouard gradually got the better of Peter Wells and your Editor respectively. The final nail in the coffin was driven in when Matthew Sadler somehow turned around an ending a clear exchange down against Spanish-South Korean IM Jose Camacho Collados. Jean-Pierre Le Roux had earlier won for Guildford, while Mark Hebden had survived a dodgy-looking position against FM Tim Wall, with Sophie Milliet gradually overcoming Sue Maroroa.

Aussie FM Sam Chow wins plenty of games for White Rose, but was gradually ground down by Nick Pert in the ending of rook and 'h' against rook, 'h' and 'f'. By the time White's h-pawn had fallen, the draw was no longer so easy. Would you have known how to hold?

S.Chow-N.Pert White Rose vs Guildford



White's king is superbly placed, but he has only one move to draw.

75 ♖e2?

Cutting off the black king looks logical, but White actually needed to lose a tempo: 75 ♖h2! ♕f3 76 ♖e2! would draw, effectively placing Black in zugzwang. He can move his king, but 76...♕f8 77 ♕f6 f4 78 ♕f5 ♕f7 79 ♖a2 draws, and if 79...♕e7 80 ♖d2 ♕f1 81 ♖e2+ ♕d6 82 ♖d2+ ♕c5 83 ♕g4 ♕c4 84 ♕xh3 ♕c3 85 ♖d8.

75...♕f3 76 ♕h5

This time it's White who finds himself in zugzwang after 76 ♖a2 ♕e6 77 ♖e2+ ♕d5: for example, 78 ♕h4 ♕d4 79 ♕g5 ♕d3 80 ♖a2 ♕e3 81 ♕b2 f4 82 ♕g4 ♖g3+ 83 ♕h4 ♖g2 84 ♖b3+ ♕f2 85 ♖xh3 f3 and wins.

76...♕f6 77 ♕h4 ♖d3 78 ♖e1 h2 79 ♖h1 ♖d8!

This indirect defence of the h-pawn essentially ends the game as White finds his rook far too passively placed.

80 ♕g3 ♖h8 81 ♕g2 ♕g5 82 ♕f3 ♖h3+ 83 ♕g2 ♕g4 84 ♕f2 f4 85 ♕g2 f3+ 86 ♕f2 ♖h8 0-1

French Grandmaster 'J-P' Le Roux has again led the way for Guildford, showing exactly how to bunny-bash while winning his opening seven games of the campaign. Nick Pert hasn't been doing so badly either with 6½/7 or, even higher in the team, Romain Edouard with his '+5'.

While Guildford remain clear favourites for the league, looking at the four sides entering the Demotion Pool, Alba likely have the best chance of staying up. Perhaps inspired by their countryman's heroics at Twickenham, the Scottish side did their best to save an improbable-looking situation against White Rose in round 7. Their ranks contain eight-time Scottish Champion and IM Roddy McKay who has long been dangerous whenever allowed a sniff of an attack.

R.McKay-L.D'Costa Alba vs Barbican



Black has just badly underestimated the danger with 28...♖h8-d8?. Now White struck: **29 ♖xg5! ♕xe5**

29...hxg5 30 ♖xg5+ decisively overloads the black king.

30 ♖xe6+! fxe6 31 ♖xe6+ ♕f8 32 ♖xh6+ ♕e7

Of course, if 32...♖g7 33 ♕e6+, but possibly D'Costa had initially overlooked 32...♕g7 33 ♕e6+ when his king lacks a good square.

33 ♖h7+ 1-0

It's going to be mate, as after 33...♕f8 34 ♕e6+ ♕e8 35 ♕g6+ or 33...♕f6 34 ♖g6+ ♕e7 35 ♖f7#.



Nick Pert imitated Keith Arkell to extract blood out of a stone and win an ending many would have given up as drawn, reminding us that by no means all rook endgames are drawn!

Pool B – Close, with Small Upsets

Manx Liberty have risen through the ranks since the nucleus of their side stopped playing in the German Bundesliga for SG Trier. Having won Division Three North then Division Two they found themselves in the top flight and in round 5 of Pool B came up against perennial league runners-up Cheddleton.

It was to be the first really big clash of the season. Cheddleton strengthened, bringing in leading Swedish Grandmaster Nils Grandelius to hold Hungarian GM Viktor Erdos on top board, while in turn Jonathan Hawkins found the white pieces neutralised by 2650-rated Romanian GM Mircea-Emilian Parligras. First blood went to Manx as IM Dietmar Kolbus defeated WIM Fiona Steil-Antoni in the battle of the captains on board 8, with Polish Grandmaster Lukasz Cyborowski soon increasing their lead.

L.Cyborowski-E.Kirk

Manx Liberty vs Cheddleton
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♖e2 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 c5 5 g3 g6 6 ♙g2 ♙g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e5 ♜fd7 9 c4!

Of course, not 9 ♜bd2? ♜c6, which wins a pawn, but as well as the immediate central challenge, White might have developed along standard KIA lines with 9 ♙f4 ♜c6 10 ♜bd2 h6 11 h4 b6 12 ♜fe1.
9...♜c6 10 ♙f4 f6?

A misguided break for freedom. Instead, 10...dxc4 11 dxc4 ♜d4 12 ♜xd4 cxd4 13 h4 h6 looks like the critical line.

11 exf6 ♜xf6 12 ♜c3 a6

Preventing any notion of ♜b5, but in any case Black is coming under strong central pressure.

13 ♜fe1

13 ♜ad1 might have been even stronger, and if 13...♜d4 (13...d4? 14 ♜a4 ♜e7 15 ♜b6 ♜a7 16 ♙h3 would be horrendous for Black) 14 ♜xd4 cxd4 15 ♜a4 followed by ♙e5 with complete control.

13...b6

13...♜d4!? 14 ♜xd4 cxd4 15 ♜a4 dxc4 16 dxc4 d3 17 ♜d1 wouldn't have equalised, but would have stirred up some trouble and had to be a better try for Black.

14 ♜ad1 ♜a7 15 d4!



Exploiting the line-up of rook against queen on the d-file to lever open the position with some effect.

15...♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 cxd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜e4 18 ♜d3 ♜c5?

This attempt to run the d-pawn won't help. 18...♜xc3? 19 bxc3 would have led to Black's centre collapsing, but 18...♜xf2!? 19 ♜xf2 g5 would at least have thrown a small spanner in the works.

19 ♜dd1 d4 20 b4! ♜d7

Only now does the young English IM attempt to randomise, with 20...♜b7 21 ♙b8 ♜a8 22 ♙e5 surely positionally lost for Black.

21 bxc5 dxc3 22 ♜xe6+ ♜h8 23 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 24 ♜xb6



It's not every day you see tripled c-pawns and containing a passed pawn for each side.

24...♙f5 25 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 26 c6 c2 27 c7?

He should have blocked the d-file with 27 ♙d5! and after 27...♙c3 28 c7 ♜c8 29 ♜c1 ♙b2 30 g4! White is winning, since if 30...♙xc1? 31 ♙e5#.

27...♜d1 28 ♜f1 ♙c3?

Returning the favour. The opposite-coloured bishops would have offered Black some chances of salvation after 28...♙b2 29 ♙e4 ♜xf1+ 30 ♜xf1 ♙h3+!.

29 ♙f3

29 ♙e4! would have interfered with Black's coordination, and if 29...♙h3 30 c8♜+ ♙xc8 31 ♙xc2 with two clear extra pawns.

29...♙e1?

The mistakes continue to flow in mutual time-trouble. Once again after 29...♜xf1+ 30 ♜xf1 ♙b2 31 ♙e4 ♙h3+ 32 ♙e2 c1♜ 33 ♙xc1 ♙xc1 34 ♙b7 a5 35 c8♜+ ♙xc8 36 ♙xc8 Black would have had some chances to hold.

30 ♙e4 ♙h3



31 c8♜+!

Avoiding the fiendish trick 31 ♙xc2? ♙xf2+! 32 ♜xf2 ♜xf1+. 31 g4! ♙xf2+ 32 ♜xf2 ♜xf1+ 33 ♙g3 would also have won.

31...♙xc8 32 ♙xc2 1-0

It's all over in view of 32...♜a1 33 ♙e5+.

Cheddleton rallied, David Eggleston doing well to make an extremely unbalanced endgame look like an easy win against Miklos Galyas, but Manx were to hold tight, former world junior champion Aryan Tari successfully defending a slightly worse endgame against David Howell.

After a weakened Manx could only finish the group stage with a 5-3 victory over Wood Green Monarchs, Cheddleton would actually overtake them, at least on game points, thanks in no small part to the '+5' scores registered by David Eggleston and Jonathan Hawkins.

That same fine score was racked up by Cambridge undergraduate Matthew Wadsworth, who also drew with Hou Yifan in the Varsity match (see *Home News*), and must now have good chances for a GM norm. Wadsworth's Guildford II side qualified with a round to spare for the Championship Pool along with Manx and Cheddleton, but the final spot was to come down to the wire.

After an excellent campaign, Celtic Tigers found themselves in fourth entering Round 7, but would go down 6-2 to Cheddleton, despite captain Chris Skulte continuing his fine run of form by defeating the Icelandic IM Bjorn Thorfinnsson. 3Cs pulled out all the stops to beat Grantham Sharks and so overtake the Tigers, but so did Blackthorne Russia. They tend to grace then top the Demotion Pool, but won't this year after a fighting draw with Guildford II saw Blackthorne finish fourth in Pool B, thanks to wins in that match from Danny Gormally and Simon Ansell, over Yang-Fan Zhou and Graeme Buckley respectively.

3Cs might have narrowly missed out on the Championship Pool, but they did win two lovely attacking games in weekends 3 and 4, one by Oxford's hero in the Varsity match, FM Daniel Abbas, and one by UK Chess Challenge supremo, WFM Sarah Longson. We'll see the second of those next month.

D.Abbas-S.Ansell
3Cs vs Blackthorne Russia
Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 d3 dxc6 3 b5 g6 4 dxc6 dxc6 5 d3 g7 6 h3 f6 7 d3 c3 d7 8 0-0 e5 9 e3 b6 10 d2 h6 11 h2

The modern-day champion of the black set-up showed the way after 11 a3: 11...d8 12 b4 d6! 13 bxc5 f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 e1 0-0 left Black with excellent dynamic compensation in Wang Hao-Carlsen, St. Petersburg (blitz) 2018.

11...d8 12 f4 exf4 13 xf4 g5 14 g3 g6 15 e1!



A strong advance, preventing Black from gaining a firm hold on the dark squares. Now 15...dxe5? 16 xe5 dxe5 17 Ae1 f6 18 f3 e7 19 d4 would be pretty grim for Black. Instead, 15...e6 16 Ae1 0-0 17 f3 looks like a pretty pleasant edge for White, but so does the game, suggesting that Black is already in trouble.

15...0-0 16 Ae1 h5?

This will backfire. 16...d4+ 17 e3 looks good for White or even 17 h1!? dxe5

18 e4 d6 19 e2 f6 20 e3, so Black probably had to try 16...e8 17 f3 g4 18 hxg4 exg4, weakening though it is.

17 d4! h4 18 f2

Simple chess, but the computer draws attention to the amazing idea of 18 exh4! gxh4 19 f6+ exf6 20 xf6 g7 21 f3 when g5 and e4 is next up, and the attack may well just be a decisive one.

18...xe5 19 d5g5 c7?

19...xb2 was the last chance, hoping for 20 c3? (20 e3 leaves White in the driving seat) 20...xc3! 21 xc3 xg5.

20 dxf3 f4 21 e3 xe3+ 22 xe3 f6 23 d6

23 d4! d4 24 e4 wins, in view of 24...fxg5 25 xf8+ xf8 26 e8+ g7 27 e7+.

23...xe6 24 xe6+ g7 25 g4 g3 26 e7+



26...h6?

Black might still have offered some resistance with 26...g8 27 c4+ h8, whereas now it's mate.

27 h5+! 1-0

27...hx5 28 h7# would be a neat finish.

The 4NCL concludes May 4-6 in Telford.

4NCL 2018/19 - Division 1 - Pool A											
Team		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Guildford I	X	5-3	7-1	7-1	7½-½	7½-½	7½-½	7½-½	49	14
2	Wood Green	3-5	X	5½-2½	3½-4½	6½-1½	8-0	7-1	5-3	38½	10
3	Barbican 4NCL	1-7	2½-5½	X	6-2	5-3	6½-1½	4½-3	5½-2½	31	10
4	White Rose	1-7	4½-3½	2-6	X	4½-3½	6-2	5-1	5½-2½	28½	10
5	Alba	½-7½	1½-6½	3-5	3½-4½	X	4-4	4-4	4½-3½	21	4
6	North East England	½-7½	0-8	1½-6½	2-6	4-4	X	4½-3½	4-4	16½	4
7	Oxford	½-7½	1-7	3-4½	1-5	4-4	3½-4½	X	4½-3½	17½	3
8	West is Best	½-7½	3-5	2½-5½	2½-5½	4½-3½	4-4	3½-4½	X	19½	1

4NCL 2018/19 - Division 1 - Pool B											
Team		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Manx Liberty	X	4½-3½	5-3	6-2	4½-3½	7½-½	5-3	6-2	38½	14
2	Cheddleton	3½-4½	X	5½-2½	5-3	7½-½	6-2	7-1	6-2	40½	12
3	Guildford II	3-5	2½-5½	X	4-4	7-1	5½-2½	6½-1½	5½-2½	34	9
4	Blackthorne Russia	2-6	3-5	4-4	X	4-4	3½-4½	5½-2½	4-4	26	5
5	3Cs	3½-4½	½-7½	1-7	4-4	X	3½-4½	6-2	5½-2½	24	5
6	Celtic Tigers	½-7½	2-6	2½-5½	4½-3½	4½-3½	X	3½-4½	4-4	21½	5
7	Wood Green Monarchs	3-5	1-7	1½-6½	2½-5½	2-6	4½-3½	X	4½-3½	19	4
8	Grantham Sharks	2-6	2-6	2½-5½	4-4	2½-5½	4-4	3½-4½	X	20½	2

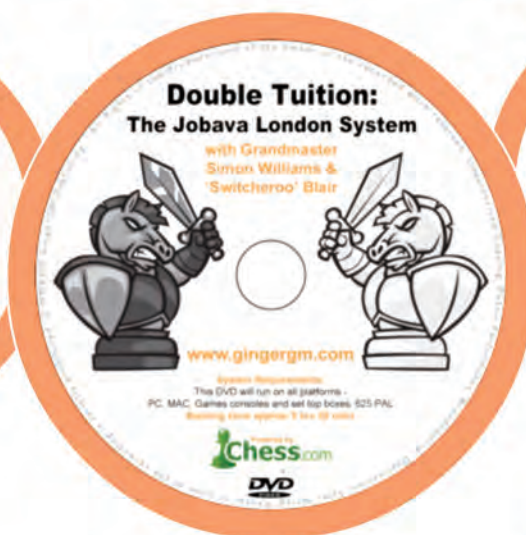
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The Rise of the Machine



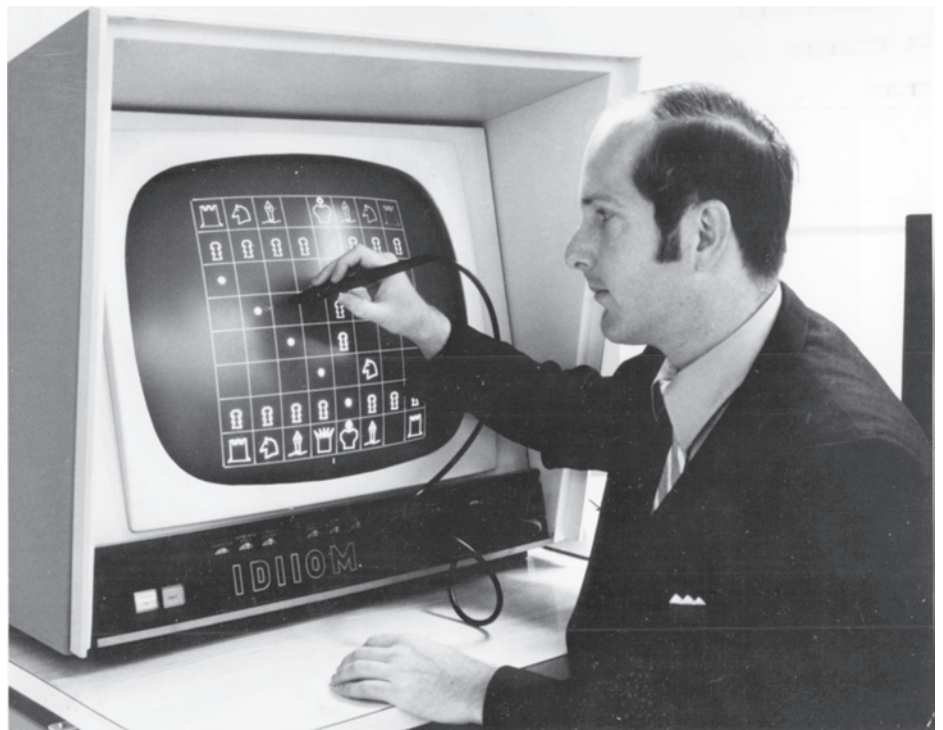
WFM and expert in Deep Learning, Kanwal Bhatia, has enjoyed two new books on computer chess, one charting their gradual progression, the other on *AlphaZero*

The last few months have unusually already seen the release of two books on computer chess: *Man vs Machine, Challenging Human Supremacy at Chess* and, a few weeks later, *Game Changer, AlphaZero's Groundbreaking Chess Strategies and the Promise of AI*. The first, *Man vs Machine*, co-authored by GM Karsten Müller and Professor Jonathan Schaeffer, details the evolution of computer chess from its earliest conceptions up to the arrival of *AlphaZero* in 2017. *Game Changer*, by GM Matthew Sadler and WIM Natasha Regan, picks up the thread from there, focusing on the development, style and games of the latest silicon beast. As a chessplayer working in computer science and artificial intelligence, these books immediately interested me, but they can both be read by a general audience.

Man vs Machine is a mainly historical account of various landmarks in computer chess since 1770. As described in the book, creating a chess machine that can beat a human at chess has for a long time occupied the thoughts of leading scientists in Computer Science, and has been largely driven by this profession rather than by chessplayers. This book describes the history of this development, in chronological order, beginning with the infamous Turk (Automaton).

Skip forward a couple of centuries, without too much of note happening, and chess piques the interest of some of the finest computer scientists of the 1950s: Alan Turing and Claude Shannon. They were interested in chess as more than just a problem of calculation – as something that required some form of artificial intelligence for a computer program to do well at. While Shannon never actually wrote a chess program, he conceptualised chess as a computational problem, including publishing on the merits of types of strategies that could be used by a computer. For instance, whether a *Type A* strategy of considering all scenarios a fixed number of moves ahead, or a *Type B* strategy of selective searching down the 'important' lines, should be used.

Much of what was discussed by Shannon at that time continued to form the basis of chess programs for the next 50 years. Turing, on the other hand, wrote what might be



described as the first chess algorithm, despite not having the resources to actually implement it at the time. Instead, he tested his algorithm by becoming the computer himself, emulating its 'thought' processes while playing against human opposition.

While technical terms and concepts are discussed throughout the book, detailed explanations are separated from the main text. Concepts like Look-ahead search, Transposition Tables, Horizon Effect and Alpha-Beta algorithm are explained in detached boxes so they can read by those interested, but skipped over without too much loss of understanding.

However, the focus is mainly historical, and often quotes or extracts of text from key players (from both the chess and science worlds) are included directly in the text. Similarly, when games are shown, they often include (cited) analysis that was published at the time, which places the programs in the context of how they were viewed by the community then. Most of the games are lightly annotated, with an increasing number of games and annotations as the programs get

stronger towards the latter part of the book. While some of the earlier games by weaker programs provide little in the way of pure chess interest, they do help to illustrate the change of strength of the programs over time.

Man vs Machine focuses on how as chess programs developed they were able to challenge human supremacy in the game. 'Man' in this case, often turns out to be International Master David Levy, who, over a period of 22 years, made bets on the strength of a computer programs within various time frames in relation to his own ability. However, their use as an aid to, rather than enemy of, players became much more promising in the 1980s, thanks to Ken Thompson working at Bell Labs, New Jersey.

To add human knowledge to the algorithms, Thompson introduced the idea of opening books: he built simple tools to scan and parse the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings* into his program, *Belle*. In doing so, several errors in *ECO* were revealed by the computer (something he did not reveal until after the computer's public matches!). Today, this combination of computer-reviewed

openings forms the basis of almost all competitive players' preparation strategy.

The second major addition was influenced by a conversation between Levy and Thompson in which Levy suggested that "computers can't play endgames". This angered Thompson who is quoted as saying: "So I went home and I worked probably for ten years on endgames from that". The result was *Endgame Tablebases*, developed by working backwards from decisive positions to prove which positions give which results. While currently limited to seven pieces, these tablebases have informed and corrected human knowledge of several endgame positions since.

Only in 1989 did Levy finally succumb in a match to a program known as *Deep Thought*. By then he had played his role and now computers were set for their final human challenge – to take on the best in the world. *Deep Thought* was developed by Feng-hsiung Heng and Murray Campbell at Carnegie Mellon University, but attained a level such that computing giants IBM began to take interest. They hired the development team, provided them with unreasonable computational power, dedicated hardware and parallel processing facilities. The result was *Deep Blue*, and in 1997 a famous victory in a match against the human world champion, Garry Kasparov. IBM concluded that it had "already reaped the equivalent of more than \$100 millions worth of favourable and free publicity" and stopped further work on chess programs after its win.

The last part of the book discusses several other Man vs Machine encounters that took place after that match, with a further Appendix of top level games. These include Anand vs *Fritz 6*, Kramnik vs *Deep Junior*, Kramnik vs *Deep Fritz*, Kasparov vs *Deep Junior*, Adams vs *Hydra* and the 2004 Man vs Machine World Championships in Bilbao featuring Topalov, Ponomarev, Karjakin, against *Fritz*, *Deep Junior* and *Hydra*. Again most of the games are lightly annotated. The book finishes on the introduction of a new program, *AlphaZero*, which at the time of publication had just beaten the current best computer in a match. No games were available when going to press though.

Fortunately, *Game Changer* takes over precisely from this point. *AlphaZero* needs little introduction by now – it is quite clearly the strongest program to have ever existed and last year scored +149 in its 1,000 game match against *Stockfish 8*. Importantly, the way it has been developed finally departs from Shannon's long-standing methods.

Game Changer is an ambitious book. It aims to describe the computational algorithms behind the development, as well as interpret the style and reasoning of the program. Further, it is always more difficult to analyse the games of a player much stronger than yourself, human or otherwise. Sadler and Regan, however, do an admirable job. They are helped along the way by access to the DeepMind team who created *AlphaZero*. Indeed, one chapter is entirely devoted to an interview with DeepMind founder Demis

Hassabis and chapters directed at 'looking inside the box' include input from the algorithm developers themselves. Hassabis describes his interest in Artificial Intelligence stemming from a young age – even during his earlier career in developing computer games, AI was always something that enthralled him. It seems as though *AlphaZero* was the perfect culmination of a passion of someone for whom chess had also once been a serious pursuit.

AlphaZero is fundamentally different from other chess programs. Its chess knowledge has not been derived from any human input – instead, it has learned from playing itself over and over again. To be precise, 44 million games were played, which took place over the course of just 9 hours. During this training phase, 800 simulations for each position were made by the algorithm, and the evaluation set to be the average of all simulation evaluations.

This is in contrast to conventional computer programs which tend to look only at the 'principal' or best variation when forming an evaluation. How each evaluation is made also differs. The evaluation of a position by a program like *Stockfish* is calculated using a weighted combination of a set of around 10, predefined features such as material, king safety, space and threats. In contrast, the algorithms *AlphaZero* use enables millions of features to be learned, providing much more complex, richer representations of the assessment of a particular position.

The comparison between the evaluations of different chess engines and *AlphaZero* forms an interesting part of the book. Sadler and Regan show several examples which leading conventional programs evaluate as '0.00' (equal), but for which *AlphaZero* sides with one side or the other. These often seem to occur in dynamic positions where a player may be led by a computer evaluation of '0.00' into thinking there exists some particular line of best play that leads to equality, whereas the truth may be much more complex.

In contrast to *Man vs Machine*, *Game Changer* has a much greater focus on chess. The authors were provided with 210 games from the match between *AlphaZero* and *Stockfish* to analyse. The third part of the book is devoted to studying these games. It has been split up into various themes such as 'Outposts', 'Mobility' and four chapters on 'Attacking the King' (indeed, it seems that *AlphaZero* has learned to be a bit of a hacker).

This method of breakdown allows concepts to be better communicated than with a simple evaluation of particular moves. There exists a hope that humans can learn something from these games, even if we do not understand the thought processes that were involved in choosing the moves. While many unanswered questions remain, a great deal of work has clearly gone into trying to distill the critical factors underlying the games.

The appearance of an entity that is so much stronger than anything seen before can't help but be fascinating in its own right, but Sadler and Regan also do a great job of interpreting the games and the algorithmic

theory and communicating it to the reader; the contribution of the DeepMind team also plays a key role here.

The main unanswered question is where do we go from here? One hopes that Google, the owners of DeepMind, do not take the same view as IBM did on *Deep Blue* after its success in 1997, and that insights from *AlphaZero* will transmit to the chess world.



Ed. – *Man vs Machine* and *Game Changer* are both available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £34.95 and £19.95 respectively. Until April 30th they are available to Subscribers for £31.45 and £17.95.

Key Landmarks in Computer Chess

- 1949** Claude Shannon publishes 'Programming a Computer for Playing Chess'
- 1950** Alan Turing writes an algorithm for the first chess computer (on paper)
- 1967** Computer program *MacHack* enters Massachusetts State Championships (+2, =2). The first time a computer wins a game in a human tournament. It achieves an official USCF rating of 1500 by the end of the following year.
- 1974** First World Computer Chess Championships won by Soviet program *Kaissa*
- 1989** *Deep Thought* posts a 2745 USCF performance at the Software Toolworks Championship, in doing so becoming the first computer to beat a GM in tournament play
- 1996** Kasparov beats *Deep Blue* 4-2
- 1997** *Deep Blue* beats Kasparov 3½-2½
- 2009** *Pocket Fritz*, running on a mobile phone, achieves grandmaster level
- 2017** *AlphaZero* beats *Stockfish 8* in 1,000 game match (+155, =839 -6)

Fifty Years Ago

Ben Graff looks back to 1969, the year of Neil Armstrong – and Petrosian vs Spassky

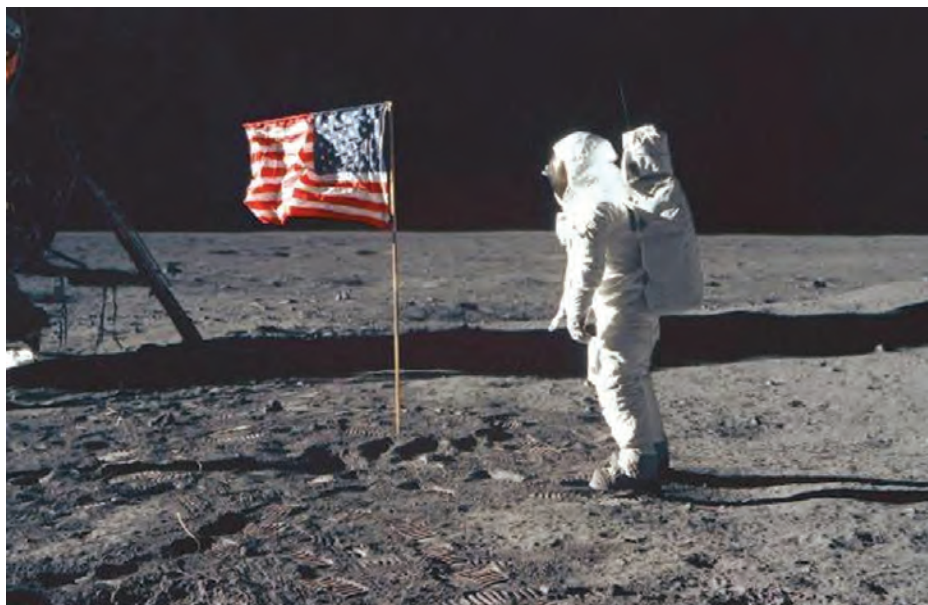
In 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon, Concorde flew her maiden test flight and on the roof of Apple records, the Beatles' last appearance brought the curtain down on perhaps the defining cultural act of the twentieth century. In the chess world, Petrosian and Spassky played each other for the world championship a second and final time. Some of our readers will have first hand memories of the event, many others (me included) have grown up with these stories. Perhaps younger subscribers might be less familiar with all that transpired.

Fifty years on I wanted to mark the anniversary by looking back on the 1969 match and the enduring legacies of our ninth and tenth world champions. A chance for all of us to re-remember or learn afresh about a compelling chapter in the history of our game.

Modern chess sometimes feels as if it begins with Fischer. The story of the 1972 'Match of the Century' will always stand at the pinnacle of chess history. So much that has happened since, through the Karpov and Kasparov years and on to Carlsen today, is extraordinary and vivid. However, for both Petrosian and Spassky, there are achievements that time cannot fade. Forged by men who formed a bridge between the post-war chess of the Botvinnik era on the one side, and the young Kasparov, who they were both to have an even score against, on the other.

Petrosian's rise to the very top was perhaps the more improbable of the two. The son of an illiterate father, Petrosian had been orphaned during the second world war and forced to work as a street sweeper in order to survive. Hard manual labour. The cold was biting, food scarce and death hung all around. He became ill, missed a year of school and developed permanent hearing problems. Yet he never gave up. There was little money, but Petrosian wisely invested in a copy of *Chess Praxis* by Nimzowitsch.

Talented, rather than an out and out prodigy, Petrosian had not necessarily been tipped to make it all the way. Still, his early experiences must have given him the constitution of a warrior. He was to continually confound expectations. By the age of twenty-four Petrosian was a regular world championship contender. In 1963, following a regime of skiing for several hours a day to build up his stamina, Petrosian took the world title from an ageing Botvinnik. Harold C. Schonberg



1969, a year when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, Leeds won the football league, England beat the West Indies at cricket, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon and Petrosian vs Spassky.

likened playing Petrosian to "Trying to put handcuffs on an eel. There was nothing to grip."

If Petrosian's ascent was slow and steady, Boris Spassky was marked out for the very top from an early age. Eight years younger than Petrosian, a tiny child during the second world war, his first experiences were still very much shaped by it. He learnt to play chess aged five on a train being evacuated during the siege of Leningrad. In the margins of history's largest events the roots of new stories take hold. By the age of ten, he had beaten Botvinnik in a simultaneous and his progress through the ranks broke all records.

Spassky had been expected to challenge for the world title much earlier in his life. Yet his nerves and perhaps the lack of focus sometimes seen in those touched by genius, meant that it was not to be. In the early 1960s, he split from his long-time trainer, divorced the first of his three wives (describing them as being incompatible like opposite-coloured bishops), and was banned for a year following alleged bad behaviour at the Student Olympics.

All these difficulties seemed to be behind Spassky when in 1966 having beaten Keres, Geller and Tal, he played Petrosian in the world championship final. However, despite being the favourite, Spassky was unable to convert

his superior positions or to wriggle out when on the back foot. For Petrosian, 1966 was a crowning achievement; for Spassky, a spur to dig deep. He showed huge resolve in battling past Geller, Larsen and Korchnoi in the next world championship cycle to set up a rematch.

So it was that in April 1969, Petrosian and Spassky played a twenty-four game match at the Moscow Variety Theatre. There was no soundproof glass to separate the players from the audience in those days. The stage was part covered by a red carpet that had a black pattern stitched within it. The arbiter's table, strewn with papers and other detritus, was draped in rich red, velvety-looking cloth. Two basic chairs for the players that would not have looked out of place in any kitchen. A pair of grandfather-like clocks flanked the backdrop. Spassky and Petrosian both wore suits and ties, as did everyone else. The images of the media surrounding the board much like at Carlsen-Caruana, save for the primitive nature of the technology. The sorts of cameras that might have been used to take holiday snaps in the 1980s were at the cutting edge in the 1960s. All those holding them appear to be men.

In the chess articles of the day, other top players heap even handed praise on both our protagonists, yet the words of former world

champion Smyslov highlighted that Spassky again started as favourite. "Who will win: Petrosian or Spassky? It is hard to say... There is a Russian saying: 'Repetition is the mother of understanding.' In 1954 I could not win the crown from Botvinnik, but three years later I succeeded in doing so. Why should not Spassky also do the same? He has every ground for achieving it."

For the first time, the opening ceremony was televised. The arbiter Albéric O'Kelly concealed a white pawn in one hand and a black pawn in the other. After some hesitation Spassky chose the left and drew white. Two days later on April 14th, game one commenced. Beginnings often set the pattern for what is to follow, even if the true meaning of events does not become clear until much later. So it appeared with games one and two, after which Petrosian was ahead, but at a price.

The first game saw a Sicilian Defence. Spassky built up kingside pressure, but Petrosian held his nerve and reached a favourable endgame. On the resumption, Spassky had the game back under control, before allowing Petrosian to sacrifice a knight, promote a pawn and take the point. In the second game Spassky played the Tarrasch Defence, Petrosian found his early offer of a draw turned down and much work ahead of him before peace broke out.

Kasparov has written: "Generally speaking, in this match there were a staggering number of Sicilians by Petrosian. This is indeed very strange! Where were his favourite French, Caro-Kann? A mystery, shrouded in darkness. Even so, let us lift the curtain slightly [...] the success in the 1st game had disorientated Petrosian! He thought that Spassky might somewhere delay, lose the thread of the game, concede the initiative..."

Boleslavsky, Petrosian's second, also noted the significance of game two: "This game had a serious influence on the further course of the match: Spassky realised that Petrosian could be let down by his positional instinct and that in his favourite positions he was beginning to feel not altogether confident."

Who can say for sure? If Petrosian had won the match, perhaps these first two games would be vested with a different meaning today. Just as when we look at our own games in the analysis room after the event, early staging posts can seem more definitive in hindsight than perhaps they really were. Either way, the next few games were to show all too clearly that the momentum was with Spassky.

Spassky won game four when Petrosian over-reached in a favourable position. Peter Clarke wrote, "His bold play was followed up inconsistently, and [...] he collapsed in a most uncharacteristic way." Then, in game five, for the first time in either of their matches, Spassky took the lead. Petrosian had never before lost consecutive games in a world championship final. In a Semi-Tarrasch that appeared to lack venom, Spassky built up more initiative than might have been expected. A



Boris Spassky had good reason to look slightly anxious at the Moscow Variety Theatre in 1969 as he let slip a two-point lead over Petrosian, but the younger man would still triumph.

pawn sacrifice followed which enabled Spassky's advanced queen pawn to grow in strength. The game culminated in a queen sacrifice and a huge ovation for Spassky.

B. Spassky-T. Petrosian World Championship (Game 5), Moscow 1969 *Semi-Tarrasch Defence*

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 d4 c5
5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 e4 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 cxd4
8 cxd4 ♖b4+ 9 ♙d2 ♘xd2+ 10 ♔xd2
0-0 11 ♙c4 ♘c6 12 0-0 b6 13 ♔ad1
♙b7 14 ♖fe1 ♖c8 15 d5 exd5 16 ♙xd5
♙a5 17 ♖f4 ♖c7 18 ♖f5 ♙xd5 19 exd5
♖c2 20 ♖f4 ♖xa2 21 d6 ♖cd8 22 d7
♖c4 23 ♖f5 h6 24 ♖c1 ♖a6 25 ♖c7 b5
26 ♘d4 ♖b6 27 ♖c8 ♘b7



28 ♘c6! ♘d6 29 ♘xd8! ♖xf5 30 ♘c6
1-0

In game eight Spassky opened up a two-point margin with a second victory with the black pieces. Peter Clarke wrote, "That even world champions are human was patently demonstrated on the 14th move when Petrosian, engrossed in his strategic plans to surround the isolated queen's pawn, overlooked an elementary tactical stroke and lost the exchange for a pawn. It was a catastrophe." Spassky should have won game nine, but let an excellent chance slip, to leave Petrosian hanging on by the faintest edge of his finger tips.

As might have been expected from a champion like Petrosian, a monumental fight back was to follow. In game ten, the fiftieth between the players, Spassky still contemplating what might have been, played poorly and was lost by move sixteen. Another reversal was to follow in game eleven. Petrosian sacrificed the exchange and adjourned with a slight material deficit, but connected passed pawns and control of the white squares; advantages sufficient for victory.

In little more than a heartbeat, a potential three-point lead for Spassky had dissolved into nothing. Few thought that Petrosian played to his best in this match. Most saw Spassky as being at, or very close to his peak. Yet Petrosian was back from the brink and Salo Flohr spoke for many when he praised his "endurance and his courage."

Perhaps the Spassky of 1966 might have cracked, but the Spassky of 1969 was made of sterner stuff. He survived both a difficult ending in game twelve and walking his king into a near mating net in game fourteen. Quiet draws in games fifteen and sixteen left him in effect starting an eight-game match, in which a tie would see Petrosian retain his title. Now was the time for Spassky finally to earn the title of world champion.

In game seventeen, Petrosian's Sicilian gave him a reasonable position, but he lost his way and slipped into a poor ending that Spassky duly converted. Then Spassky won a truly beautiful game nineteen, complete with any number of sacrifices, moving Geller to say, "It must be a long time since we have seen in a match for a world championship such courageous and decisive play as that demonstrated by Spassky."

B.Spassky-T.Petrosian

World Championship (Game 19),
Moscow 1969
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♙g5 ♘bd7 7 ♙c4 ♖a5
8 ♖d2 h6 9 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 10 0-0-0 e6
11 ♖he1 ♙e7 12 f4 0-0 13 ♙b3 ♖e8
14 ♖b1 ♙f8 15 g4 ♘g4 16 ♖g2 ♘f6
17 ♖g1 ♙d7 18 f5 ♙h8 19 ♖df1 ♖d8
20 fxe6 fxe6



21 e5! dxe5 22 ♘e4 ♘h5 23 ♖g6! exd4
24 ♘g5! 1-0

Two down with five to play, Petrosian was not done, outplaying Spassky to win game twenty. Like a boxer who has been on the ropes, soaking up the blows, some wondered if he might still have the energy to hit out a final time and level the score, but it was not to be. In a Ruy Lopez in game twenty-one, it was Spassky who registered the last victory of the match, when Petrosian made the wrong decision in declining to embrace complications in the middlegame. Two draws later, Spassky was finally the tenth champion of the world.

Neither man would win the world title again. Both would prove unequal to Fischer in



Watched by a small crowd, Spassky defends the black pieces against Petrosian, although this wasn't at the 1969 world championship match, but rather the 1973 IBM tournament in Amsterdam. Spassky's favourite QGD held firm, but he would be defeated by Donner and could only finish fourth as Petrosian shared first place with the Slovenian GM Albin Planinc.

the next cycle. But not before Petrosian had ended Fischer's twenty-game winning streak in the second game of their candidates match. Spassky too would have moments of future glory, not least a victory over Fischer in the 1970 Olympiad, a game where the watching players were moved to autograph the board. Spassky took a plus score against Fischer into the 1972 world final. Another player might have won through holding Fischer to the rules more firmly. Spassky's observation that he simply wanted to play, a tribute to his love of the game.

Spassky and Petrosian remained contenders for the world title into the 1980s. In 1984, when preparing to take part in USSR vs Rest of the World, Petrosian was diagnosed with cancer. He could not believe how ill he was and still wanted to participate, but died soon afterwards at the age of fifty-five.

Petrosian's style has not always earned him the best press. He has something of a reputation for negative and defensive play, yet had a lower draw percentage than Fischer or Tal. He left an outstanding record of having been either world champion or a world champion candidate in ten consecutive three-year cycles between 1953 and 1980. They say that sometimes defeat does not forge character so much as reveal it. In losing in 1969 Petrosian had shown the fighting qualities of a true champion, just as he had all those years ago when surviving the hardships of the second world war.

Today in his eighties, Spassky is our oldest living former world title holder. His ability to

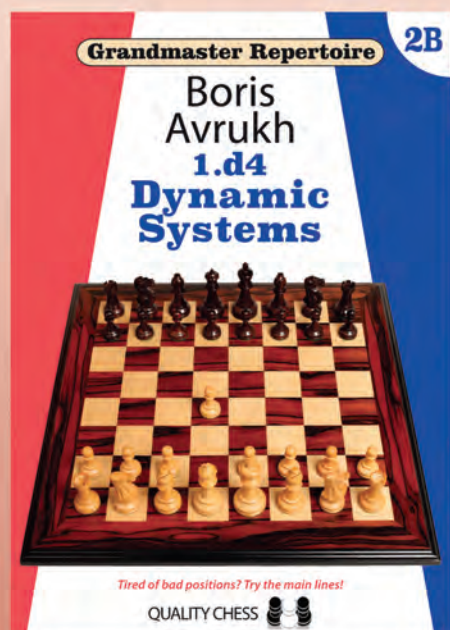
play at the very top also faded in the 1980s, but his legacy is so much more than that of Fischer's foil in 1972. It has been written that Spassky should have become world champion at an earlier age and held the title for longer. That his drive did not match his talent. Yet to play at or close to the pinnacle of world chess from the 1950s to the 80s, to win through brutal candidates tournaments twice, to compete in all the world finals between 1966 and 1972 is an extraordinary record. To achieve all this and finally only be defeated by Bobby Fischer, points to achievements that could not have been carried by talent alone.

Fifty years have passed since 1969. Our world has changed in many ways. Chess has changed too. Yet the battles of the past do not slip from our collective memory. If anything they seem to resonate more deeply as the years go by. Petrosian and Spassky. Giants of the 1960s. Giants today.

Author's note – Readers who want to learn more about this match might be interested in the following works, all of which I acknowledge as amongst my sources: *Petrosian v Spassky* by Harry Golombek and Peter Clarke, Garry Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors: Volume III*, and *Play Better Chess* by Leonard Barden.

Ed. – We can also highly recommend Thomas Engqvist's *Petrosian: Move by Move*, as well as *Spassky: Move by Move* by Zenón Franco, both of which are available to Subscribers at the special price of £17.99 until April 30th.

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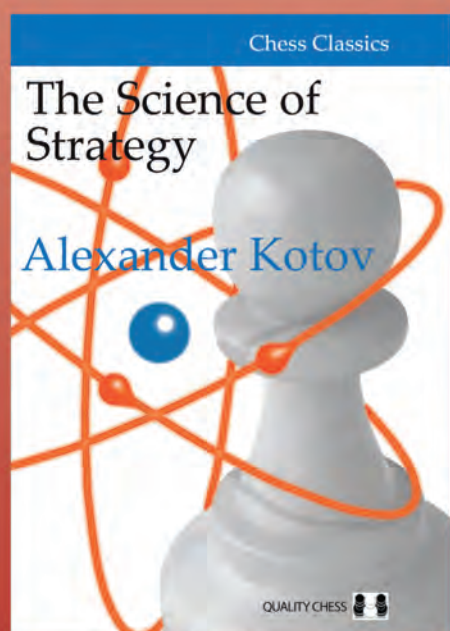
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Dynamic Systems – Grandmaster Repertoire 2B by Boris Avrukh

When Boris Avrukh released his 1.d4 repertoire books in 2008 and 2010, they caused a sensation. GM Michael Adams remarked that *“The high-quality Grandmaster Repertoire series has taken this format to a completely different level.”* Avrukh’s newly revamped 1.d4 series has raised the bar even higher.

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Boris Avrukh is an Olympiad gold medallist, former World Junior Champion and analysis partner of World Championship finalists.



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The Science of Strategy by Alexander Kotov

Chess is a strategically deep game and it is no surprise that players often struggle to find the right strategy over the board. Computers may be able to show a good move in a position, but they can’t explain how it should fit into an overall plan.

Kotov’s clear and methodical style makes this book an ideal guide to chess strategy. He describes the chess in words rather than relying overmuch on variations, and illustrates his ideas in insightfully annotated positional games, with the likes of Alekhine, Botvinnik and Karpov featuring heavily.

Alexander Kotov was the 1948 Soviet Champion (jointly with Bronstein), and a member of the USSR gold-medal-winning team at the 1952 and 1954 Olympiads. He is also renowned as a chess author, most famously for *Think Like a Grandmaster*.

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James Sherwin

IM James Sherwin was quite simply one of the leading American players of the 1950s and 1960s, as John Stubbs discovered when he sat down alongside IM Chris Beaumont to interview Jimmy late last year

James Terry Sherwin was born in New York City on October 25th, 1933. Jimmy became an IM at the age of 20, but is probably best known for being featured in the first game of Bobby Fischer's *My 60 Memorable Games*. As we know, this was a win for Fischer, but Jimmy also beat and drew with Fischer on other occasions. When Fischer was 11 he would often visit Jimmy's New York apartment, and they would play blitz late into the evening.

Throughout the 1950s, without exception, Jimmy beat all the top American chess players. He finished third or tied third in the U.S. Chess Championship on four occasions, and won the U.S. Blitz Championship on two occasions, in 1954 and 1956. He also drew with Tal at Portoroz, but lost to Petrosian.

As well as being a top American chess player, Jimmy also worked full-time as a lawyer and corporate executive in New York. He later moved to England in 1999 and set up base in Bath. He soon started playing in the Bristol and District Chess league for Bath, and regularly competed in the Bristol Congresses. He also played in the 4NCL, and was a regular at such events as the Golders Green Rapidplay.

Jimmy gave up competitive chess in 2015, but recently came out of retirement to play in the ECF Inaugural Blitz Championship on September 8th 2018. He now enjoys other blitz events around the Bristol area and is beginning to find his 'competitive edge' once again. He still hates losing, of course, but his infectious smile always shines through.

During a coaching session for my son Oli with Chris Beaumont, I mentioned to Chris that Jimmy had played at the recent ECF regional blitz event in Bristol. Chris explained he knew Jimmy well, so I suggested that maybe we should try and get an interview with him.

Chris tracked Jimmy down, and arranged for us to interview him after he played in the Bristol Blitz Championship on Sunday November 25th. Jimmy came along with photos, magazines, and some of his treasured scoresheets. This soon drew quite a crowd. After the blitz had finished, Jimmy, Chris and myself walked down to a local coffee shop in Clifton, where Chris was quick to quiz Jimmy.

Just a few simple questions first of all to start off with, Jimmy. When did you start playing chess, and who taught you?

I learnt from a friend when I was about five.



James Sherwin - still going strong at 85 and pictured at last year's Chipping Sodbury Rapidplay.

Wow, at five!

I never played seriously, you know, until I was about 11.

Was that the first time you used chess clocks and scoresheets?

Yes, I joined the Marshall chess club.

When you were 11?

11 or 12. I won the Marshall Junior Chess Championship when I was 12 or 13.

We are going to have to talk about Fischer. You were a member of the Manhattan Chess Club?

Well, I was a member of both the Marshall and the Manhattan chess clubs, but my allegiance was to the Marshall.

Was that Fischer's club as well, the Marshall?

No Fischer was more Manhattan.

So when you first met Fischer, how old was he?

I think he must have been about ten.

So you would have been about 19?

Yeah, I was about ten years older. He used to come over to my house, my apartment, with

his mother Regina, and we used to play blitz all night, with my wife writing poetry in the background (*laughs*).

Sounds romantic! (*more laughter*)

We had bridge chairs and a bridge table we used to play on. Robert would straddle the chair, so he had the back of the chair in front of him, and I used to hold my own with him in those days.

I was going to say, how did you get on against him. I guess you must have been at that stage a fairly experienced player, and pretty strong?

Yeah, I was getting pretty good.

What did you think of Fischer as a player at that time? Did you think this kid is amazing, he is probably going to be a GM, or did you think, my goodness, he is going to be world champion?

No, I didn't think he was going to be world champion, but I thought he was a good blitz player, and he was fun to play with. I knew he was a pretty strong player. In those days he was better at blitz than he was at tournament chess.

So when he came round to your house to play chess, who arranged this? Did you

suggest it?

No, it was Regina, his mother.

Did she think you would be a good sparring partner for him?

Well, we were sort of friendly, and I was always nice to Bobby, and I think she thought it was a good experience for him.

At what point did it dawn on you that Fischer really was, you know, something absolutely incredible as a chess player, because he was winning the U.S. Championship 11-0, wasn't he?

Well, that was actually quite a while later. I think it was when he played at the Canadian Championship in Montreal that I was also playing in. I think it was in 1956, and at that time Bobby beat me 10 games in a row, in five mins chess or whatever it was at that time, and it was then that I really knew he was out of my class.

He also had played in one Open Championship. I think it was the New Orleans tournament which was probably '54 or '55, where I had tied for first. Well I think I tied for first, but he hadn't done too well in that and was scoring a lot of draws, so he was still quite young in those days.

In '54 I was 21, so he must have been 11, and he hadn't yet matured. His first coming-of-age game was the opening one in his book *My 60 Memorable Games*, when he beat me for the first time in serious chess. It was in the New Jersey Log Cabin Tournament, and that game was a very nice game: knight takes rook's pawn. The next one we played was in the U.S. Championship that year, and that was the one I think when he showed some real brilliancy. He played: rook takes bishop's pawn. It was a very pretty game.

Yeah, yeah, I remember that, and then he played queen takes c1 (laughs).

That's right, then I knew he was really good (general laughter).

GAME No. 36		MANHATTAN CHESS CLUB SINCE 1877 America's Oldest - Ever Progressive			
Event: US Chess		Round: 6		Date: 12-26-59	
White: Mr. Sherwin		Black: Mr. Fischer			
WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK
1. P-K4	1. P-G4	2. P-K4	2. P-K4	3. P-K4	3. P-K4
4. P-K4	4. P-K4	5. P-K4	5. P-K4	6. P-K4	6. P-K4
7. P-K4	7. P-K4	8. P-K4	8. P-K4	9. P-K4	9. P-K4
10. P-K4	10. P-K4	11. P-K4	11. P-K4	12. P-K4	12. P-K4
13. P-K4	13. P-K4	14. P-K4	14. P-K4	15. P-K4	15. P-K4
16. P-K4	16. P-K4	17. P-K4	17. P-K4	18. P-K4	18. P-K4
19. P-K4	19. P-K4	20. P-K4	20. P-K4	21. P-K4	21. P-K4
22. P-K4	22. P-K4	23. P-K4	23. P-K4	24. P-K4	24. P-K4
25. P-K4	25. P-K4	26. P-K4	26. P-K4	27. P-K4	27. P-K4
28. P-K4	28. P-K4	29. P-K4	29. P-K4	30. P-K4	30. P-K4
31. P-K4	31. P-K4	32. P-K4	32. P-K4	33. P-K4	33. P-K4
34. P-K4	34. P-K4	35. P-K4	35. P-K4	36. P-K4	36. P-K4
37. P-K4	37. P-K4	38. P-K4	38. P-K4	39. P-K4	39. P-K4
40. P-K4	40. P-K4	41. P-K4	41. P-K4	42. P-K4	42. P-K4
43. P-K4	43. P-K4	44. P-K4	44. P-K4	45. P-K4	45. P-K4
46. P-K4	46. P-K4	47. P-K4	47. P-K4	48. P-K4	48. P-K4
49. P-K4	49. P-K4	50. P-K4	50. P-K4	51. P-K4	51. P-K4
52. P-K4	52. P-K4	53. P-K4	53. P-K4	54. P-K4	54. P-K4
55. P-K4	55. P-K4	56. P-K4	56. P-K4	57. P-K4	57. P-K4
58. P-K4	58. P-K4	59. P-K4	59. P-K4	60. P-K4	60. P-K4

Bobby Fischer won the 1959/60 U.S. title, but was held to a draw by Jimmy Sherwin.

Notes by Chris Beaumont

J. Sherwin-R. Fischer

Log Cabin Tournament,

New Jersey 1957

King's Indian Defence

1 c4 ♖f6 2 d4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 0-0 5 f3 d6 6 ♙e3 e5

In the Sämisch variation Fischer goes for a plan of ...e5 and ...♗h5. I prefer 6...c5 or playing for ...c6, ...a6 and ...b5 à la Robert Byrne, with queenside counterplay.

7 d5 ♗h5 8 ♗d2 f5 9 exf5 gxf5 10 0-0-0 a6 11 ♙d3 ♗d7 12 ♗ge2 ♗c5 13 ♙c2 b5

Black must distract White from playing g2-g4, blasting open the kingside.

14 ♗g3 ♗f4 15 ♗ge2

Maybe 15 ♙xf4 exf4 16 ♗h5 is a better try.

15...b4 16 ♗a4 ♗xe2+ 17 ♗xe2 ♗xa4 18 ♙xa4 ♙d7



Fischer now takes over as his queenside play is rolling, and fast.

19 ♙c2 a5 20 c5 a4 21 c6 b3 22 axb3 axb3 23 ♙xb3 ♗b8 24 ♗c4 ♙e8

24...♙c8 could be stronger.

25 h4 f4 26 ♙f2 ♙g6 27 h5 ♙f5 28 h6 ♙f6 29 ♙d2 ♗a5

29...♗e8 and ...e4 looks effective.

30 ♗a1 ♗b5 31 ♙a7 ♗xb3! 32 ♙xb8 ♗xb2+ 33 ♙c1 ♗fxb8 34 ♗d1 ♙h4 35 ♗a2



35...♗b4?

The wrong rook. 35...♗b4 36 ♗a6 ♗b1+ 37 ♙d2 ♗d4+ 38 ♙c3 ♗dx1 wins.

36 ♗a6 ♗b5 37 ♙d2 ♗xd5+ 38 ♙e2??

A disaster as 38 ♙c3 would have won, but both sides were evidently frantically low on time.

38...♗xd1??

With more time Bobby would surely have found 38...♗e4+! 39 fxe4 ♙g4+ 40 ♙f1 ♗xd1#. 39 ♙xd1 ♗d4+ 40 ♙e2 ♙d3+ 41 ♗xd3 1-0

What a game!

You also knew loads of the other top American players like Robert and Donald Byrne, Reshevsky, Evans, Benko... all those guys. I know because you have told me before that you maybe weren't that warm towards Reshevsky. Is that right, or was it the other way around and maybe Reshevsky wasn't a warm personality to everyone else?

Well, Reshevsky was warm to himself! I was never crazy about, or keen on him. There is a famous episode that I have told you about.

Can you tell us again?

Well it was in the U.S. Championship and we were two rounds from the end.

Which year was this?

I think it was one of the ones when I tied for third. Evans had two players to play, and Reshevsky had to play me and somebody else. Reshevsky said he was going to beat Sherwin and then beat some other guy in the last round, and so go ahead of Evans. Evans met Reshevsky in the elevator and said to him: "You know Sherwin can be a tough cookie sometimes, and he might even beat you?" Reshevsky replied, "Not in a million years!" (laughs). And after the game, when I had really crushed him – I smashed him completely in a Sämisch – I said to him: "How time flies!" (laughs).

I bet he loved that!

My favourite put-down of all time (more laughter).



A caricature of Jimmy from the 1958 Portoroz Interzonal tournament programme.

Notes by Chris Beaumont

J.Sherwin-S.Reshevsky

U.S. Championship, New York 1957
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6
5 f3 0-0 6 ♙e3 e5 7 d5 ♘h5 8 ♚d2 a6 9
0-0-0 f5 10 exf5 gxf5 11 ♙d3 ♚e8

Deviating from Fischer's 11...♘d7.

12 ♙ge2 ♘d7 13 ♚de1

An interesting plan. White is aiming for f3-f4, not g2-g4.

13...♘h8

A bit passive. My choice would be to play ...b5, perhaps even immediately.

14 ♙c2 ♘c5 15 f4 ♚e7 16 ♘g3!



This idea is now overwhelming.

16...♘xg3 17 hxg3 ♙d7 18 g4 ♚ae8
19 gxf5 ♚f6 20 ♙xc5 dxc5 21 ♙e4
♚b6 22 f6 ♚xf6

22...♙xf6 23 ♚xh7+ ♘xh7 24 ♙xf6+
♙g7 25 ♙xd7 wins.

23 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 24 fxe5 ♚xe5 25 ♚xe5
♚xe5 26 ♙xh7 ♙f6 27 ♙b1 ♙g7 28 ♚h6+
♙f7 29 ♚h5+ ♚xh5 30 ♚xh5 ♙g4
31 ♚h1 ♙e2 32 b3 b5 33 ♚e1 ♙g4
34 ♙d3 ♙d7 35 ♙c2 b4 36 ♚f1 ♙g7
37 ♙f5 ♙e8 38 g4 a5 39 ♚h1 ♙f8 40
♚h7 ♙g7 41 ♙d3 1-0

Jimmy made that look easy!

Did you get on OK with the other guys?

Yes, I did. In particular I was very close to Donald [Byrne], and felt a very strong friendship with Donald. He died prematurely. Robert was a little austere, so I wasn't really friends with him, but I respected him, and Evans was a little bit of a killer. He had a very good record against me. I only beat him once.

Evans was fearsome!

He used to cough when you were in time pressure, and he used to kick you under the table (*laughs*). He had a spike on his shoes... and it hurt; it really hurt.

You're joking?

Yes, and in time pressure it was quite crucifying. Eventually he remarried, a croupier in Las Vegas, Reno. She was German and an absolutely lovely lady. She really remade Larry – he became very lovely as a person after he married his second wife. I also used to know

Larry's mother, and she always tried to keep him under her wing, but was unsuccessful. I was also very friendly with Bisguier. He was a great guy.

And Benko?

Yes, Benko. We always had a lot of fun together, because we both got into tremendous time pressure, and pieces would fly all over the board. It really was something spectacular.

Actually, you were both quite famous for that, weren't you? (*both laugh*)

Yes, it was really something. I used to do OK against Benko and beat him a few times, and I drew with him at Portoroz. It was a game I should have won. A very lovely game, but he got me and he drew it in the end. We always had a friendly rivalry. I used to make a lot of fun of him as he used to run his fingers through his mop of black hair. He had this comb, and was always combing his shock of hair. So we had a lot of fun, but he didn't mind the ribbing, and I also used to, you know, being politically incorrect, I used to make fun of his Hungarian accent (*laughs*).

Fair enough...

I suppose it wasn't very nice. He had a way of emphasising the last word. "Would you like a draw?" "Remis!" (*general laughter*).

You played some amazing players. You drew with Tal, beat Gligoric, Larsen, Ivkov, Byrne and Rossolimo. I mean, these are legendary names.

Yeah, I beat all the players in America. I beat all of them at one time or another, although some of them had better scores against me than I had against them. I didn't travel much overseas. I only played at Portoroz, and also the World Junior Championship in Copenhagen. Ivkov and I were room mates in Copenhagen. I think it was in '53, and we



Jimmy rarely played abroad, but did take part in the famous Portoroz Interzonal of 1958...

remained good friends for the rest of our lives. We really enjoyed each other's company. We learned to get along very well, even though I did him a disservice by beating him in the last round.

Notes by Chris Beaumont

J.Sherwin-B.Ivkov

World Junior Ch., Copenhagen 1953
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e3 0-0 5
♙d3 d5 6 ♘f3 c5 7 0-0 ♘bd7 8 a3 dxc4
9 ♙xc4 cxd4 10 exd4 ♙e7 11 ♚e1 a6?!
12 ♙a2 ♘b6 13 ♘e5 ♙d7 14 ♚f3 ♚c8

Black gets into trouble with his ponderous play. By contrast, Jimmy brings all his pieces to the kingside and plays for mate.

15 ♙g5 ♙c6 16 ♚h3 ♙d5 17 ♙b1 g6 18
♚h4 ♚d8 19 ♚e3 ♘c8 20 g4!



It's over. The white attack is simply overwhelming.

20...♙d6 21 ♚h3 ♘de8 22 ♚h6 ♙g2

Desperation, as White threatened 23 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 24 g5.

23 ♙xg2 ♘xd4 24 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 25 g5
♙c5 26 ♙e4 1-0

That's actually a very nice game.

I also beat Larsen in that tournament.

I'm trying to remember that game actually. Just remind me of the opening?

I was White in a King's Indian.

That's right, you broke through on the queenside.

Yes, it was one of those queenside attacks which won.

I remember now, you nipped an exchange from him, didn't you? You also played three world champions: Petrosian, Tal and Fischer, I think. Did you play any other world champions?

No Smyslov had already retired and I didn't play Spassky either. It was just Fischer, Petrosian and Tal. And Reshevsky, of course, but he was never world champion.

What about chess books when you were younger? I am assuming you did have chess books?

I did have a few chess books, but I didn't really



Portoroz, 1958. On the left Jimmy can be seen standing wearing tartan next to Pal Benko. Svetozar Gligoric is third from the right, just above Bobby Fischer who is seated next to David Bronstein, with Tigran Petrosian second left next to Oscar Panno who has Mikhail Tal behind him.

have a chess library. My uncle, who was a dentist, was also a chess player, and he gave me *Cambridge Springs 1904*, one summer in Vermont.

I haven't seen that. Who is it by?

It is just a book of the games – it's an old edition. I took that up to Vermont with me in the summer when I was eight or nine. I had nothing else to do there except learn some chess, so I learned my chess from *Cambridge Springs 1904*. Then I bought a copy of Nimzowitsch's *My System*, so I had that one also, and those were my two chess books.

Oh, wow, those were your two chess books?

Yes, until I started playing seriously, and then I started to subscribe to the Hungarian edition of the *Soviet Championship*. So I learnt a little Hungarian, which helped me make fun of Benko (*laughs*).

If you had to recommend three chess books to any-up-and-coming chess player, what would they be? I know it is a bit unfair, so I will give you time to think about it.

Well, I also at some point bought the book *Modern Chess Openings*, one of the early editions, and I started memorising them. But I never really got that far, only as far as the English Opening. I never really had favourite chess books, so I couldn't really recommend anything. I just don't know enough about them. I do have a wonderful book of some of Tal's games. I loved Tal's games. Of course, I

also played over Fischer's *60 Memorable Games*, particularly the rook endgame of the first game (*lots of laughter*).

When I was thinking of this question, I thought I bet Jimmy mentions Fred Reinfeld and Irving Chernev!

Well, I knew them both, and I had some of their books, but their books are generally not books for strong players.

Maybe Fred Reinfeld, but Chernev, and the instructive endgames by Capablanca, and one or two others.... I could happily read them now as an IM, and I would still learn from them.

I never studied the endgames, and that was my problem.

You never studied endgames?

No, and that is why I lost that endgame to Fischer (*laughs*) at Portoroz.

What do you think your strengths were then in chess?

Well, I was tactically very strong. In my heyday I always thought that I was as good a tactician as anybody.

Right.

But it was undoubtedly a misconception when Fischer came along. I wasn't afraid of anyone. I was quite fearless, and quite eclectic in my openings. In declining order for White: d4, e4, c4. For Black, Sicilians and King's Indians, but also Nimzos, Grünfelds and some QGDs and QGAs. You couldn't count on me for anything,

so that was a real advantage.

I was also a fighter, a real fighter. Those were my strengths. My weaknesses were time pressure, and probably a lack of theoretical opening knowledge. But I didn't do too badly in the openings. I mean in the U.S. Championships that I played in, I always felt that my openings were OK. But you see, I was working full-time during those tournaments, so I would play in the evenings and work in the daytime, so I didn't really have the time, except at the weekends, to prepare properly.

There is something else related to our strengths and weaknesses. I remember asking you quite a few years ago why it is that older players, like myself, are getting weaker. Why is it that you and I are getting weaker and weaker? And you said to me – and I nearly fell off my chair when you said it – you said it was because you were losing your competitive edge. I told that story to other players and they all burst out laughing, saying: Jimmy Sherwin has lost his competitive edge! (*Jimmy laughs*)

Well, you don't have this burning desire to win as you did when you were younger. I mean there is also the question of you just slow down, your thinking slows a little bit, so your clock becomes more of a problem.

It is not the same for me, Jimmy. It is the opposite for me. I am speeding up.

Really? Good for you (*laughs*).

I was much slower when I was younger. I

think that was related to my will to win, because I really, really wanted to find the one and only, the very best move.

Well you were always a perfectionist.

At this point I, John Stubbs, couldn't resist chipping in.

It was a bit like Kasparov at St. Louis recently in the quickplay. He was always getting in terrible time trouble, and the commentators were saying it was because he is always looking for the perfect move.

I saw some nice games from Kasparov in that. He had a nice game that he won against Caruana. He was Black in a Sicilian, a very nice Najdorf.

You hear that a lot of sportsman as they get older, just don't practice as much. They don't quite have the same desire?

Well, the main thing for me is the theory; the theory is just enormous at this point. Even if you are a full-time chess player, you can't keep up with it. I stopped studying chess ten years ago. So I don't have any theory at all anymore.

And now Chris took back over the line of questioning:

Another unfair question for you, Jimmy. Can you give me your top five players of all time, and top can mean anything? It can mean the one you love most, the one you think is the strongest, or whatever. This is really an unfair question, so much I can't answer it myself! *(laughs)*

I think I would say Kasparov, Fischer, Alekhine and Capablanca and Lasker.

What about Karpov?

Well, I have only got five *(laughs)*. I would like to put Karpov in there, and Carlsen of course, and Tal. I loved Tal's games.

For me, he didn't do enough for long enough.
Well, he wasn't well.

Yes, you're right; he wasn't well. But for four or five years Tal was absolutely magnificent.
Five players is too restrictive, Chris! You have got to allow me at least seven.

Yeah, I know. It is impossible to answer. Next question, another unfair one: What do you think is the best game you ever played?
Well, it is hard to say. You know I had some major scalps. I would say it probably has to be the game against Bisguier, a very nice game.

Good, and we are obviously going to show your win against Fischer as well. That has to be in for sure?

That is actually an exciting game. It was a 50/50 game - 50 mins for the whole game.

Was the other win against Fischer a 50-minute game as well?

Yes it was, but in that one he overstepped the time limit in a drawn queen ending. So you can't count that as a great win. But I had some good games. The Reshevsky win was very good, and the game I beat Evans was a

gaf **HET GAFFERKE**

Huiskrant voor en van al wie bij GAF (Sint-Niklaas) werkt Nr 4 - Augustus 1973

JE KAN OVERAL GOEDE DINGEN VINDEN...



Op deze foto samen met zijn vrouw Judy en zijn dochters Alison Dale (links) en Miranda, juist voor de komst van Galen Leigh. Het schaakbord, waaraan de hele familie vergaderd zit, werd hem ten geschenke aangeboden bij zijn vertrek uit België.

I. Mr. Sherwin. Velen hebben U hier in de fabriek gezien, maar niet iedereen weet wie U — Nee, in Kraainem, een gemeente bij Brussel. Maar ik werkte in Sint-Niklaas.

EEN PAARD VERDWEEN. EEN TRACTOR VERSCHIEEN...

Op een mooie dag was het paard verdwenen. Een tractor kwam in de plaats. De grond werd gelijk gemaakt.

Nieuwsgierige mensen stelden zich vragen: Wat gaat er gebeuren?...

Wanneer U dit leest zullen wij waarschijnlijk zien waarom deze tractor er nodig was.



BOUWPLANNEN ???

Lees op blz. 3

Jimmy with his first wife, Judith Johnson, and daughters, Miranda and Alison, in Belgium.

nice one as well... And the game against Gligoric, and the game against Ivkov... I also beat Robert Byrne in a very nice game, and I played some very exciting games with Lombardy. I had a plus score against him, but I think the most exciting game of them all was the draw from the black side in a Schliemann.

Yes, in the Schliemann Defence.

Here we checked the recording was going OK. To Jimmy's delight, all was fine:

That is good, or you know we would have to kill you, John *(loud laughter)*!

What about the world championship, Jimmy? Are you watching that?

Well, I signed up to the Judit Polgar commentary which cost 20 quid, but in fact I am watching Svidler, Grischuk and Giri which is better, and it is free. I thought I might go up there and watch some of it. I have never actually seen Caruana.

Having been to the match, I again chipped in:

You don't actually see a lot. Unless you are in the VIP area, you don't get very close. The closest you get is at the post-game press conferences.

Well I didn't manage it, as it turns out, but I have been enjoying it. Some of the games have been very exciting, even when you see them after the fact.

Any game in particular?

I think the tenth game was the most exciting one of all. You know, my tactics might not be what they once were, but that game was so complicated that I think it was almost beyond human comprehension. Really incredible.

Chris now once again got back into his stride:

Who do you want to win the world championship with just game 12 to go?

I am rooting for Caruana. I think he has done a wonderful job. He is not scared, and he is

ready to do battle. If you had to say who has won the match so far on points like a boxing match, I would say Caruana has won. I like his style. He has a very brilliant and aggressive style. He is also very tactical, and I like that. He is not just trying to grind people down. He takes more chances than Carlsen.

I agree. Caruana has played better, and been prepared better.

I think Carlsen is too much of a hunk. He's just trying things on, but he is not really deeply in to them, I think.

Here I simply had to point out that Carlsen seemed happy to just play for the rapid tie-break:

Well, I want Carlsen to win. I think he is a sexier prospect for chess. I think Carlsen is a good image for chess, and Caruana is a little bit geeky. He is not so attractive to the media, I fear.

Caruana is just a nice person. He is very humble, softly spoken. I think he is a good person. After all, chess is a humbling game, and there's always a lot more there than you can appreciate. I think he is intrinsically a humble man.

What do you think of the modern generation of super GMs? How do you think they compare to the guys in the 50's and 60's?

I don't know; it is hard to say. It is a new type of chess, which is chess by computers, with lots of preparation. In my day you used to prepare your own stuff, and you know, nothing was a given.

Do you worry about the long time future of chess?

No! My sense of chess is somewhat diminished by the fact that computers play infinitely better than humans. I find it somewhat dispiriting that humans should still

be trying to do something that a computer can do better. For me, the game has been solved at this point, and that takes some of the joy of it away.

Yes, I know what you mean.

It was an unknown treasure of universes when I was growing up and you were entirely on your own. You might prepare some little thing, but it was nothing serious. Now at the top level it is a whole different confection of computer preparation which takes a different mindset. I think memory has become increasingly vital, whereas talent used to be more important. I find that very sad.

I do too and because of that I am a little bit concerned about the future of chess. I have been saying for a while now that there is going to come a time in classical chess where the top guys will not be able to beat each other. That is being borne out somewhat by the present world championship. World champions are going to have to win in five-minute games, which I feel is unsatisfactory. We don't want chess to be like that.

I think they should have made the match longer.

I agree – it is far too short. They are too scared to take a chance with just six whites. Six whites, and that's it!

I think 24 games is better, at least 16 or 18, and then you have a reasonable chance of somebody winning.

Have you seen the games of AlphaZero?

What?

AlphaZero, the amazing computer?

No, not that I know off.

You have to see these games, Jimmy. AlphaZero is an artificial intelligence computer. They gave it the rules of the game, but they told it nothing else, just the rules. After it had played millions and millions of games with itself, over several hours, it was the best chess player on the planet. It can beat anybody, any computer in the world, and it is completely self-taught. Nobody has told it anything, nobody has even said get your pieces out and it is good idea to get castled (general laughter). Nobody has even told it that; it is totally self-taught. It beat Stockfish, one of the strongest

chess computers on the planet. It completely crushed it in many of the games.

I think I might have seen some of its games? It was one of the Queen's Indian pawn sacrifices, where it goes queen to h1 [Ed. – *As superbly annotated by Mike Read in our May 2018 issue*]. It was truly amazing, a fantastic game. I really like that line for White.

I like that line for White as well. A lot of grandmasters are taking a lot of interest in it now because of the games of AlphaZero.

Having watched some excellent material on AlphaZero, I now had to interject:

Matthew Sadler has got some really good videos on YouTube examining AlphaZero, including looking at some of the recent world championship games with it. However, I guess I should really ask: Are you glad you played in the era you did, Jimmy?

Yes, I am. I don't think I would have played chess so seriously in these days of computers. I was never a professional, but I am not sure I would have wanted to play at the top level if I knew computers could solve everything. That to me is, you know, just not fun. I don't like to think that a computer can just do things a lot better than I spent my whole life trying to do. It would feel like a waste of time. Talent and intuition still play a role, but not the same as they used to.

Of course, you had a very high profile job at the time. It must have been very difficult to mix chess with your full-time job, and still play at the top level like you did?

Well, in a way it was therapeutic, as you didn't have time to worry about the game. However, I was at a disadvantage as I didn't have the time to prepare anything, but I still could play. I never felt I couldn't play with anyone. I never sat down with anybody and was afraid to play them.

It was time to hand back to Chris, who had another question he was keen to ask:

Why did you take to chess so much, do you think? What attracted you to it?

Well, when I stayed for long summers in Vermont, where there were no kids my age within 10 miles, I had to do something, and reading and learning about chess kept me busy. It was a great time, and it certainly helped me. I think chess is a good exercise

and test of intelligence, and it has a certain intrinsic beauty that I like.

I then chipped in:

And you were good at it?

Well, I was good at it, but I am just a routine player now. I enjoyed playing fast chess, it was great fun. Chess is still a wonderful game.

You've been playing a bit more of late, Jim?

Well, I haven't played for a year, but last month at your request I played the Chipping Sodbury Rapidplay. I also played in a weak Wiltshire Rapid Championship and won that over nine rounds. I also played at the British blitz qualifier in Bristol. I didn't qualify, but I managed a squeakily positive score. I was just too exhausted playing 15 rounds.

You also several years ago used to play for Bath in the Bristol League, didn't you?

Yes, I did for a while.

I guess you and Chris have played a few times then?

Chris now couldn't resist pointing out that they had, about ten times, and that every time Jimmy won, he was always lucky, which provoked more laughter.

Yes, you are right. I was lucky!

You have been enjoying playing again then, Jim? No, not really (laughter). I am losing too many games!

Well, you are still a legend of chess, Jimmy, and it's great having you back playing in Bristol again.

Thank you so much. You say a legend; it is really more an artifact.

Here Chris felt obliged to point out that everybody has heard of James T. Sherwin, that every chess player on the planet has heard of Jimmy Sherwin. I also took the opportunity to relay greetings from your editor, Richard Palliser, to Jimmy.

That is very nice of him. I have played Richard twice, I think? He beat me in one of those disgusting Caro-Kann's where you trade off the queens (much laughter all round). The line where you go Qc6 check (Ed. – 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 ♠f6 5 ♠c3 ♠c6 6 ♠f3 ♠g4 7 cxd5 ♠xd5 8 ♠b3 ♠xf3 9 gxf3 e6 10 ♠xb7 ♠xd4 11 ♠b5+ ♠xb5 12 ♠c6+). He beat me in that endgame which he had prepared. Then I played him in a Lasker Defence, which I think was in the British Rapid. I got the better of him, but he held on.



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chessscotland.com/news-post/edinburgh-congress-2019/

I have played a lot of the British players. I played Penrose in the Juniors in the 1950's and drew with him. I beat the Scottish guy – his name begins with R.

Chris knew whom Jimmy meant.

Rowson. Have you played Nigel Short, Jimmy?

I never played Short, but I did get to know him when I was doing the world championship broadcast.

You were doing the world championship broadcasts?

Well, I was one of the participants. It was the Karpov-Korchnoi match.

Was this in America?

Well, the broadcast was in America, but the match was in the Philippines. Anyway, Short came over as a guest on the show, and he spent 6-8 hours in my apartment in New York. We talked a lot. He was quite young at the time, but he was very nice.

Recognising our coffees were long cold, Chris and I finished with a few quick questions for Jimmy:

Did you play Keith Arkell, our local GM?

Yes, I beat Arkell twice.

You played quite a few British GMs surely, in the 4NCL and the British Championships?

I think I beat Mestel having been lost. I also



At the British Blitz Qualifier in Bristol Jimmy faces Oliver Stubbs. The eventual winner of and only grandmaster in the tournament, Nick Pert, looks on. Jimmy would finish on a plus score.

lost one or two rapid games to Nunn.

You also mentioned you were American Blitz Champion?

Yes, I won that tournament twice.

What year?

I think one was in '54 when I was 21. I won it another time; I forget when that was. But I mean: I used to do OK. I came third, or tied for third, three or four times in the U.S. Championship, which was not bad.

Not bad at all!

You know they weren't the world's very best players, but they were good players.

They were all professional, but you weren't?

Yes, they were all professionals apart from me and Donald. He was an English teacher.

In your professional/business life, I suppose your colleagues and clients knew you were a chess player?

Yes, they did, for better or for worse (*general laughter*)!

We could have kept going all day, but were delighted to make Jimmy smile and laugh so much. This legend of chess certainly had a lovely time revisiting some of his favourite memories of the royal game.

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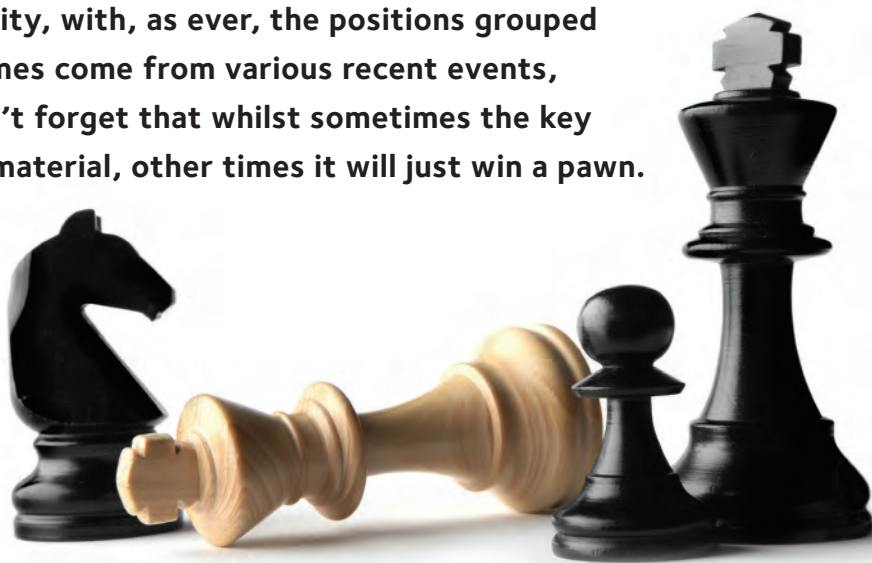
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Solutions on page 54.



Warm-up Puzzles



(1) P.Gayson-P.Doherty
4NCL, Horwich 2019
White to Play



(2) S.Okhai-E.Alizada
Kidlington 2019
White to Play



(3) G.Trueman-R.Cowan
4NCL, Horwich 2019
Black to Play



(4) D.Fridman-A.Tukhaev
World Rapid Ch., St Petersburg 2018
White to Play



(5) V.Kovalev-M.Aditya
Moscow 2019
White to Play



(6) K.Kulon-M.De Verdier
4NCL, Telford 2019
White to Play

Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54



(7) J.Obihara-S.Ingle
Thames Valley League 2019
White to Play



(8) B.Grachev-S.Lobanov
Moscow 2019
White to Play



(9) H.Nakamura-R.Svane
Gibraltar 2019
White to Play



(10) J.Houska-D.Buckley
4NCL, Telford 2019
White to Play



(11) M.Collins-A.Brewis
Surrey 2019
Black to Play



(12) E.Paehtz-V.Kovalev
Wijk aan Zee 2019
Black to Play



(13) P.Wake-M.Plumb
Chichester 2019
White to Play



(14) A.Esipenko-V.Popov
World Rapid Ch., St. Petersburg 2018
Black to Play



(15) C.Deepan-D.Sharma
New Delhi 2019
White to Play

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 54



(16) A.Esipenko-V.Keymer
Wijk aan Zee 2019
White to Play



(17) F.Steil Antoni-D.Kolbus
4NCL, Telford 2019
Black to Play



(18) D.Gukesh-D.Sharma
New Delhi 2019
White to Play



(19) V.Kovalev-S.Kuipers
Wijk aan Zee 2019
White to Play



(20) G.Quillan-D.Movileanu
Gibraltar 2019
White to Play



(21) F.Garcia Trobat-A.Saric
Seville 2019
Black to Play



(22) D.Flores-J.Martinez Alcantara
Antofagasta 2019
White to Play



(23) F.Urkedal-B.Arvola
Norwegian League 2019
Black to Play



(24) B.Harsha-H.Melkumyan
Gibraltar 2019
White to Play



Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs – by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

If I were to write my autobiography, I think I should call it 'My Greatest Mistakes', because to be honest it is from those mistakes that I have learned the most. You know, those things like I have learned that I should not have applied for that job which I was not qualified for (broken dream), or of course I will be able to make this 50-50 tackle without injury (broken leg), or I should never have gone out with that crazy girl when I was a child (broken heart).

It seems easy to look back on the successes we have had; they linger briefly in the mind and disappear as the sun fades away into the sky each day. Yet those painful errors of judgement, those maddening mistakes seem to eat into our very soul, reappearing at the most inconvenient of moments. Yet these mistakes are what make us. We learn from them. That is not to say we exercise better judgement going forward – but we do learn from physical and mental pain.

The reader will not be surprised to learn that I consider this equally applicable to the chess board. Success for us has many fathers whilst failure is an orphan. We want to turn back the clock, have another go, try another move – except we cannot. We have all been there and we will visit that place again. Yet the truly wonderful thing about chess is that we can put away the pieces for another day, dust ourselves down, then assemble our army for yet another battle. Perhaps the path to glory is not to play looking for the most brilliant moves, but to make the fewest mistakes. In my view Fischer and Petrosian did just that quite brilliantly.

However, instead, of Petrosian you've got Portman. I do hope you don't mind.

R.Raböse-C.Portman

Bad Breisig Open 2003

Queen's Gambit Declined

I played this game when I lived in Germany. I enjoyed many chess encounters in its leagues and tournaments. This one was held in Bad Breisig, which lies next to the river Rhine and is, as I recall, a quite beautiful area. That is one downside to chess – all too often we are languishing indoors when there is so much to explore outside.

1 d4

My opponent was quite a bit stronger than me, but I wrote in my notes that I was up for

the fight on this day.

1...d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♙g5 ♘bd7

This QGD line was a popular one with me at the time.

6 e3 ♖a5

Now that White's dark-squared bishop cannot interpose on d2, I wanted to pressurise the e1-a5 diagonal.

7 ♘d2 ♙b4 8 ♙xf6 ♘xf6

8...gxf6 was my other consideration to open up the g-file for a rook, but I thought I'd just play a solid game and not compromise my pawn structure. Here after 9 cxd5 cxd5 Black has three pawn islands to White's two.

9 ♖c2 0-0 10 ♙e2 ♖e8

Maybe a tad premature. Perhaps the thrust with 10...c5 is more appropriate.

11 0-0



Here's a question that faces us amateurs a lot – should Black now take that knight on c3 or not? If yes, why? If not, why?

I had a little think about which minor pieces might be better or worse in the middlegame to come, taking into account the pawn structure, and I decided that since White did not have the bishop-pair, I could afford to capture on c3. Yet was this a mistake? I mean, what is that knight on c3 actually doing anyway?

11...♙xc3 12 bxc3

Of course, the stronger player has no wish to exchange queens. She is a tremendous attacking piece after all.

12...♙d7?!

I am not totally sure why I played this move here. There was a reason at the time – honestly! The engine has it as an acceptable option, but I still cannot quite work out what is happening with this little prelate some 16 years on.

13 a4

Fixing some squares.

13...e5 Time to make the break. **14 ♖fb1** Building up the pressure. **14...♖ab8 15 c5**



I never expected that, but I can see why he played it. Life is beginning to look very uncomfortable all of a sudden as White has more space and command of that b-file. I ask again: what might Black's plan be here? What would yours be, dear reader? I am not just talking about moves; I am referring to a plan.

15...g6

Giving the king some air.

16 ♖b3 exd4 17 cxd4 ♙g7?

Was there anything wrong with 17...♙f5? The move selected was a total waste of time.

18 ♖b2 ♙c8 19 ♘f3 ♘e4 20 ♘e5

A strong move, threatening all sorts of unpleasant things on c6.

20...♖c7

20...♖xe5 would have been very interesting and I read in my notes from the time that I almost played it. Then 21 dxe5 ♘xc5 22 e6+ f6 23 e7 ♙e6 might be roughly balanced.

21 a5



His little white jacket is on and the impertinent fellow dares to challenge the

black army. His friend, the rook, looks after him from afar, just as a sniper would give cover to an infantryman about to storm an enemy position.

21...f6?!

And there it is, one of my greatest mistakes. I missed an excellent opportunity to just take the pawn on c5 with my knight. After 21...dxc5! (If only I could turn back time..., as the song goes) 22 dxc5 ♖xe5 23 ♖xe5+ ♜xe5 24 a6 d4 25 axb7 ♜xb7 26 ♜xb7 ♙xb7 27 ♜xa7 ♙c8 the game is pretty much level. Of course, I had no hope of seeing all this in my head. I mean, I am not Magnus Carlsen for heaven's sake, although I do have 'Carl' as my name.

22 d3

It was my opponent's turn to err. Perhaps he could write a book about mistakes too, and couldn't we all? After 22 dxc6! White is easily winning, as shown by 22...♞xc6 23 ♙b5 ♞e6 24 ♙xe8 ♞xe8 25 a6.

22...a6

That's stopped the little miscreant on the a-file. Around about here I thought that I still had good drawing chances. I had already made one terrible mistake, so I needed not to make another.

23 ♜b6

We all know these types of positions, don't we? The pieces tied down, no room to play, holding on for grim life (or is that grim death?), whilst our enemy improves their position, sometimes while having the temerity to drink tea. Why do we play this game anyway? It is a form of masochism at times.

23...♞e7

The books refer to this as prophylaxis. I call it, 'I couldn't find anything better'.

24 dxc1

Knights are cavalry. The cavalry charges forward – that's all that horses want to do. Yet we must remember, gentle reader, that sometimes in order to progress, we have to go backwards. Chess teaches us a great many things, but this is one of the best metaphors for life. The knight is heading for an improved position.

24...♞a8 25 ♙a2



It was here that I made another mistake: I panicked. Rather than sit and wait, I decided to attack. This can be rewarding when it comes off, but simply miserable when it doesn't. All these years on, the engine points out that Black could play a move like 25...♙f5, but I



Bad Breisig stands on the banks of the Rhine, about half way between Bonn and Koblenz, and just south of the famous bridge at Remagen. Carl certainly enjoyed his chess-playing visit.

was the one doing the fighting at that time – where ever is old Fritzzy when you need him?

25...♙f2?!

Brave, but foolhardy.

26 ♙xf2 ♞xh2 27 ♞d2 ♙h3 28 ♙f3

I just left this position to make a cup of tea. I thought I would let the engine have a good think about it. The result? It gave an assessment of '0.00' and suggested that Black plays 28...♞ae8...

28...♞ae8

...which I did! Maybe my sacrifice on f2 wasn't a mistake, but a brilliancy? Maybe I just don't understand chess at all.

29 ♞e1 h5

Yes, still '0.00'. During the post-mortem a strong player, Udo Guy, virtually laughed at this move and stated I should have played 29...g5. However, I did not wish to have to fend off ♜bb1 and ♜h1, steaming down the h-file. I mean, I cannot lose the game from here can I? That would involve some sort of mistake.

30 ♜b3 g5 31 ♞g1 g4

Incredibly, at this point I thought I was going to win this game. Caissa, though, sometimes has a brutal way of turning your dreams into the darkest of nightmares.

32 ♙f1



Now came one of the biggest chess blunders of my life. A moment of total chess blindness. I thought I could take the bishop on f3 and he could not recapture because my bishop on h3 pins the pawn. I simply had to play a move like 32...f5 or 32...♙h8.

32...gxf3??

Blood and sand! The world just ended. This loses. Looking back, it is obvious that it is a mistake, but I learned that the moment that led to the mistake was the key point to take forward. What was that moment? Quite simply it was the fact that I moved instantly without pausing to check my calculations again, which we are supposed to do after our opponent has made a move. Now White could not believe his luck and eagerly played...

33 gxf3+ 1-0

...with check, winning the queen. I still have my notes from that day. They read: 'This was shocking and I felt more embarrassed than annoyed. I had the chance to continue the pressure and blew it big time. I should have known better than to wear my *Master of Disaster* tee shirt today!'. This is the end of the broadcast.

It is worth noting that the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* definition of a mistake is: "Misunderstand meaning or intention of; choose wrongly; a thing incorrectly done through ignorance or inadvertence". I could agree with all of that, but might it not be prudent to be a little more positive and take a tip from chess? Perhaps next time the lexicographers could also add 'learning point'.

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Readers' Letters



Newspaper Chess Columns

I was interested in the article by Tim Wall on 'Grandmaster Blimp' in the February issue, particularly on his memories of collecting newspaper chess columns. As chess news was hard to come by, I followed the same path over 20 years earlier.

In 1956 I was a paper boy, and took to reading the news as I delivered. There was one house that took an unusual paper called the *Manchester Guardian* – it was unusual because I lived on the edge of London, and in fact the paper often arrived a day late. I discovered that this paper had that unusual feature, a chess column (on a Thursday, if I remember correctly after all this time). The column was by a Mr. du Mont, but was soon taken over by Leonard Barden, after I think du Mont died.

I was so besotted by chess at the time that I spent some of my meagre earnings on reserving a copy of the paper once a week, thus beginning a lifelong connection with the paper that eventually became *The Guardian*. I religiously cut out and pasted the chess columns into exercise books, and I have them still. I remember reading for the first time of a 13-year-old schoolboy in New York called Bobby Fischer, and soon of a dazzling new star from the USSR named Tal, so Mr. Barden, one of your readers does have all your columns since 1956.

There were other chess columnists as well, of course; C.H.O'D. Alexander wrote an excellent column in *The Sunday Times* for a while, but it took me time to discover this. It is difficult to realise now, in the age of the internet, how primitive were the means of communicating chess information. I can remember in, I think, 1958 ringing up a friend who worked for Reuters to get the latest moves in a world championship match. A string of moves would be transmitted from Moscow, in-between other, more commonplace news, and the complete game would not be available in the west for a day or two.

Anyway, thank you Mr. Barden; long may you continue your column and give pleasure to an aged chess fan (and retired paper boy).

John Collins, Nottingham

The Grandmaster

It is rare indeed that I feel remotely motivated to challenge anything that appears in your fine magazine. Ben Graff's review in the March *CHESS* of *The Grandmaster: Magnus Carlsen and the match that made Chess Great Again* by Brin-Jonathan Butler is lucid, informative and most useful. But its usefulness lay in convincing me *not* to spend my money on this book.

Why so? Well, the reasons I came to this

choice are mostly to be found in Mr. Graff's closing two paragraphs. But my objection, such as it is, lies not with Mr Graff's illuminating review, but with views apparently made by the author himself with regard to Bobby Fischer.

Now, Bobby Fischer sells chess books, DVDs and anything else chess-related even though it is more than ten years since he ceased to be amongst the living. So, it may be a good ploy to wheedle him into the text of your book somewhere (the title would be the best place, but then you really do have to know what you're talking about), even if there may be no real reason to do so.

Given the enormous amount that has already been written, I am sceptical that there exists by now any meaningful, hitherto unrecorded, insight capable of advancing our understanding of the psyche of Bobby Fischer that is likely to be found anyhow, anywhere, or anytime soon, if at all.

I don't believe the "Don't ask me about losing" quote is that hitherto undiscovered gem of insight for the reason that Fischer included three of his losses in his *My 60 Memorable Games*, something which, to the best of my knowledge at least, was fashionable neither before nor after that book's first appearance in 1969. The conclusion seems to be that Fischer was more open to discussing his losses than most other masters have been, at least in print.

So, if we take this 'fact' along with Mr Butler's 'tittle-tattle', we seem to have something of a conundrum. And that would be par for the course where Bobby Fischer is concerned. But no insight has been gained, that I can detect.

The speculation that Fischer, were he still alive, might have been a Trump supporter, is surely nonsense, and irrelevant too. First of all, speculation of this sort would best be excluded from any worthy publication. Otherwise, we might be treated to all kinds of baseless speculation about all sorts of people and who really wants to read material of that nature in book on chess? Or indeed anywhere else, for that matter?

All of Fischer's outpourings in his later years made it abundantly clear that he was utterly disenchanted with the U.S. and with its legal and political systems. Having listened to recordings of his many calls to radio shows (and, yes, that was every bit as unrewarding as you might expect), it's inconceivable to me that Fischer would even recognise the authority of any U.S. President, let alone show some form of allegiance. Hence this Trump-supporting speculation smacks of a superficial appreciation of Fischer and there is more than a hint of opportunism in writing of this sort.

In conclusion, I have the very clear feeling that the last sentence of Mr Graff's review might equally well have read: 'Mr Butler makes an unimportant contribution to the

cannon of chess writing and his book is not worth reading'. My view may be wrong, but I am more than ready to risk it given the multitude of interesting books on chess being published these days, most of them by authors with reliable chess credential.

Peter Baggott, Bushbury

Ben Graff replies:

Thank you for your letter. It is always good when our reviews get people talking. I wanted to give some thoughts on the interesting points you make. The anecdote Brin-Jonathan Butler shares on Fischer, saying not to talk to him about losing, comes from an exchange the author had with Frank Brady, a Fischer biographer, founding editor of *Chess Life*, former USCF secretary and a past President of the Marshall Club. Brady knew Fischer well and I personally can imagine that someone as competitive and driven as Fischer might have said this. It is not akin to him necessarily being a bad loser.

Similarly, the speculation that Fischer might have been a Trump supporter is sourced to Harry Benson, a photographer who spent time with Fischer and took an iconic Fischer photograph that appeared on the cover of *Life* in 1971. Benson made the point with regret and elsewhere in the book Butler does a good job of outlining the extent to which Fischer stood apart from convention (to say the least) and covers many of the issues that you so eloquently highlight.

He might not be a chess player, but my feeling is that Butler did his homework and his book is well sourced and well written. Fischer is always going to be a source of fascination and *The Grandmaster* does give a compelling perspective.

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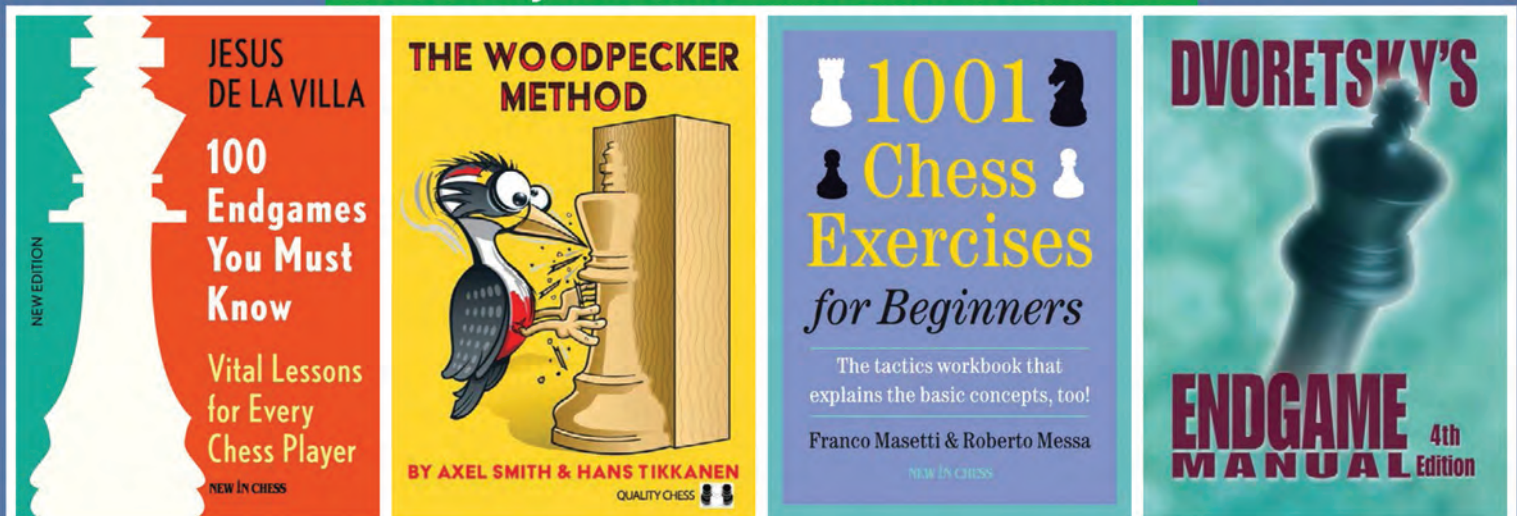
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How Chess Ideas Evolve



Amatzia Avni charts the journey of a couple of his own creations

For many years I have been interested in the way chess ideas evolve. Reading descriptions written by chess players, relating to their experience, and conducting interviews with prominent players, I strove to find out more about the fascinating process, during which the grain of an idea grows and matures into a coherent plan.

Essentially, players divide into two categories. When a move they have played is pointed out to them, in conjunction with the question "How did this move occur to you?", there are those who shrug their shoulders and admit that they don't have a clue: "Divine inspiration, maybe".

Such an answer is not very helpful, of course, as we cannot draw any lessons from it.

And then there are players who tell you that they know *exactly* how they formed the idea of a specific move: "You see, I thought about ('A') and then recalled a game which appeared three years ago in *Informator* ('B')... Looked up at my opponent's face and realised that he was annoyed ('C'), so I looked at the board again and asked myself what am I going to do with my bishop ('D')..."

The problem with such a description is that it is not very reliable. The players are not liars, they actually do believe that this is how it happened; simply, our memory plays tricks on us. Sometimes we forget things which occurred, other times we 'recall' things which didn't take place at all.

The field of chess composition represents a rare opportunity to follow the path of an idea, from start to finish. This is because composers document a lot of what they are doing. The fear, even nightmare, of chess composers, is that they will hit upon a splendid idea, revert to another scheme, and then forget the former idea and be unable to reconstruct it. Hence, composers usually write down a successful idea, or store their sparking finding in the computer files, before they move on.

Here we are able to reconstruct the evolution of the idea with a high degree of confidence, that this is, indeed, how things developed.

On the morning of the 15th August 2017, having no work that day, I played some bullet games on the chess.com site. One of the games reached the following (approximate) position:



In this totally lost position, I continued **1 ♖d6 b4 2 ♔e7**, rushing forward with the king, in the slim hope of giving some checks before the inevitable capitulation. Play continued: **2...a4 3 ♔e8 b3 4 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 5 ♔f8 b2??** 5...♖a6 wins. **6 ♔g8**

Only at this point it seems we both realised that White is delivering mate, on either h7 or with 6...g5 7 ♖f6#. The final position was cute, so I decided to make a study out of it.

Amatzia Avni

Shared 1st to 3rd prizes,
Pat A Mat 2016-17

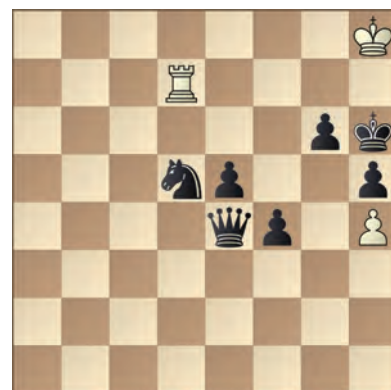


White to play and win

1 ♖e7 threatens **2 ♖g8#**, and if:
a) **1...g5 2 ♔e3!!** (intending **3 ♖f6+! ♔xf6 4 hxg5#**) **2...♗d8 3 ♖f8 ♔xe3 4 ♖g8+**

(but not **4 ♖f6+? ♔g6+**) **4...♔g6 5 ♖f6#**;
b) **1...♔f7 2 ♖xf7 ♗d8+ 3 ♖g8+ ♖xg8+ 4 ♔xg8 ♔f6+ 5 ♖xf6 c1♗** and now the immediate **6 ♖f7** (as in the bullet game) fails to **6...♗c8+**, so White deflects the black queen with **6 ♔e3+! ♗xe3** and only now **7 ♖f7**.

While composing the above study, I toyed with several schemes. One of them was (approximately) the following:

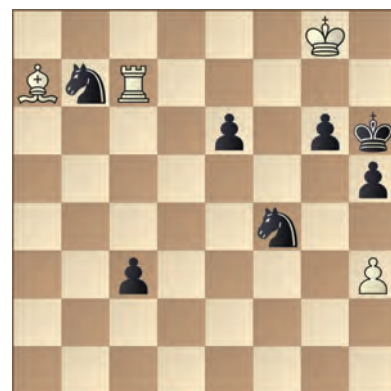


White to play

Observing the computer screen with *Fritz*, the first line suggested was naturally **1 ♖h7#**. The interesting thing was hidden in the second line (aka the second best move for White): **1 ♖g7** with the evaluation '0.00' – meaning total equality.

Why? After **1 ♖g7** White still threatens **2 ♖h7#** and **1...g5?** is not a cure on account of **2 hxg5#**, so **1...♔f6** is forced, but then **2 ♖xg6+!** leads to stalemate.

I then set out to compose another study:



Black to play, White draws

1...♖d5 2 ♜xb7 c2 3 h4! ♜f6+ 4 ♖h8
c1 ♜5 ♙e3+! ♜xe3 6 ♜g7!

Despite his huge material advantage, Black is unable to win:

6...g5 7 hxg5+ ♜xg5 8 ♜g6+ again results in stalemate.

On the evening of that very day I emailed both studies to my friend Yochanan Afek, wondering if the two schemes have independent value. After all, both studies use a similar deflection mechanism (♙e3+).

Yochanan replied that he would look at it in the forthcoming days, as he was at the time engaged with prior commitments. Meanwhile I discovered that the ♜g7 idea could be implemented with the black queen under attack. This was a major breakthrough. On August 20th I emailed Yochanan the following position:



White to play and draw

1 ♜g5+ ♖h6 2 ♜g8 ♜f6+ 3 ♖h8
♜xg5 (otherwise 4 ♜f7#) and now not 4
hxg5+? ♜xg5 and Black will eventually win,
but 4 ♜g7!!.

Within three or four hours I got a return email with a three-move introduction. This is how the study obtained its final shape.

Amatzia Avni & Yochanan Afek

1st prize, draw section,
Krug-50 ty. 2017



White to play and draw

1 ♜b7+ ♜f7+! 2 ♖f6! (2 ♜xf7+? ♜g8)
♜d5+ 3 ♜xf7 g1 ♜4 ♜g5+ ♖h6 5 ♜g8
♜f6+ 6 ♖h8 ♜xg5 7 ♜g7!! e5 8 hxg5+
♜xg5 9 ♜g6+ ♖f5 10 ♜h6! ♜g5 11



Wesley So produced arguably the best game of 2017 in the U.S. Championship, which he won.

♜g6+

Later Afek put the study on his Facebook page and received a zillion 'likes'. One guy was so thrilled that he put the study on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BIOqQsD_wY. He commented, "How do you come up with a move such as ♜g7 I don't know. It's beyond my understanding."

Well, now you know.

It began with a one-minute game played on the internet, developed into a study, the computer pointed towards a funny move, then it was developed into a second study, upgraded by the finding that this move is the preferred option even when a capture of a whole queen is possible, and strengthened by a good technical introduction by a fellow composer. Quite a route!.

The previous example was a demonstration of *serendipity* – a phenomenon where you search for a certain thing and discover on the road, unintentionally, something else, something even more valuable.

The next episode is quite different. The composer knew from the start what he was looking for. This doesn't mean that the creative work was easy – far from it – as many technical obstacles had to be met before a sound (i.e. correct) execution of the idea was arrived at.

It all started when I saw the following magnificent sacrificial game, one of the best in recent years:

J.Xiong-W.So

U.S. Championship, Saint Louis 2017
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♙g2 ♙e7
5 ♜f3 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♜c2 a6 8 a4
♙d7 9 ♜d1 ♙c6 10 ♜c3 ♙xf3 11 ♙xf3
♜c6 12 ♙xc6 bxc6 13 ♙g5 ♜b8 14 e3
c5 15 dxc5 ♜e8 16 ♜d4 ♜d7 17 ♙xe7
♜xe7 18 c6 ♜e5 19 ♜e4 ♜c5 20 ♙d5
♜d3 21 ♜xc7



21...♜xf2! 22 ♖xf2 ♜xb2+ 23 ♖f1 ♜h5
24 ♜g4 ♜xh2 25 ♜f3

White has survived the first wave of attack; all his weak points are covered.

25...c3 26 ♜c1 e5!

Now if the white rook deserts the fourth rank, 27...e4! wins on the spot, as the white queen is overloaded.

27 ♜h4 ♙d2 28 ♜d1



28...♜d8!! 29 ♜d5 An attempt to create chances with White's advanced c-pawn.

29...♜xd5 30 ♜d4 ♜xd4

And not 30...exd4? 31 c7!.

31 exd4 ♜xd1+ 0-1

White resigned, as 32 ♜xd1 c2 33 ♜c1 ♜b1 34 c7 fails to 34...♜xc1+ 35 ♙e2 ♜e1+.

I was intrigued by a variation which was

left behind the scenes, namely 30 ♖xd2 ♗5xd2 31 ♜e2!?



An imaginative try, temporarily preventing mate, counting on White's trump card, the c6-pawn. It turns out that this too is insufficient to save the battle: 31...♖b1+ 32 ♜f2 (if 32 ♜e1 c2) 32...♗xe2+ 33 ♜xe2 c2. However, the idea of 31 ♜e2 is fascinating and I wanted to demonstrate it within a study.

Of course, such a study should add considerable value to the game. It is worthless to just copy the actual combination. As such, I decided to incorporate repetition of the known motive of deflection, and include other combinational motives.

The study went through several modifications, which I shall spare the reader. First the play around the 'point' 8 ♜e2!! had to be built, and then the introduction which leads to it. The end result was this:

Amatzia Avni

2nd Honourable Mention,
Joitsa-80 2018



White to play and win

The black king is dead, but before getting to the kill White must take care of his own monarch.

1 ♜e2

1 ♜xg2? ♗d2+ 2 ♜g1 ♗xg3+ 3 ♜f1 ♗h3 is only a draw.

1...g1 ♗+ 2 ♜xg1 ♗d2+ 3 ♜h1 ♗aa2

Black has generated strong counterplay and after 4 ♜e2 ♗xe2 5 ♗b1 ♗h2+ he draws.

4 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 5 ♜e2! ♗xe2 6 ♗xg4

The move ♜e2, which was useless on the

fourth move, turns out to be a strong shot one move later, as White unleashed a file opening which enables his queen to return to the defence. Black was forced to transfer his rook from d-file to the e-file, so now if 6...♗a1+ 7 ♜g1 ♗xg1+ 8 ♜xg1 he cannot get back to the eighth rank in time to stop the f-pawn promoting.

6...♗h2+ 7 ♜g1 ♗h2



With this manoeuvre Black brought his rook back to the d-file so that after 8 ♜f3 (or 8 ♜h3) 8...♗a1+ 9 ♜f1 ♗xf1+ 10 ♜xf1 ♗d8 his mission would be successful.

8 ♜e2!!

Appearing in a study form, this star move now combines two compositional elements: a repetition of the *deflection* of the rook on d2 to the adjacent e-file (an echo of 5 ♜e2), and *clearance* of the bishop on c8, the rear piece of the battery ♜c8 & ♗g4, by opening a diagonal.

8...♗xe2 Or if 8...♗a1+ 9 ♜f2!.

9 ♜h3

Another motive, clearance of the eighth rank, emerges *en passant*.

9...♗a1+ 10 ♜f1

And the f-pawn decides. In comparison to the previous study, the main idea (♜e2!) was not transformed and remained intact, but became richer.

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The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played
by International Masters and
Grandmasters in February

1 =	Reti Opening	170 games
2 ↑	King's Indian Defence	121 games
3 ↓	Caro-Kann Defence	113 games
4 ↓	1 d4 ♜f6 sidelines	97 games
5 ↑	Queen's Gambit Declined	93 games
6 ↓	Nimzo-Indian Defence	89 games
7 =	Sicilian, Najdorf	84 games
8 =	Slav Defence	84 games
9 =	1 d4 d5 sidelines	61 games
10 ↑	Sicilian, 2 ♜f3 d6 sidelines	60 games
11 ↑	English, 1...c5	58 games
12 =	Ruy Lopez, Berlin Def	56 games
13 ↑	English, 1...e6	55 games
14 ↓	English, 1...♜f6	53 games
15 ↓	English, 1...e5	53 games
16 ↑	Queen's Indian Defence	53 games
17 ↑	Petroff, 3 Nxe5 var.	49 games
18 ↑	Giuoco Piano	46 games
19 ↑	Catalan Opening	45 games
20 ↓	Sicilian, 2 ♜f3 sidelines	44 games

**2,514 games played between
1-28 February where both players
were rated over 2400 Elo**

Source: TWIC. Compiled by HIARCS 14.



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theweekinchess.com



Overseas News

FRANCE – Arkady Dvorkovich scored something of a coup last year when he tempted Emil Sutovsky away from being President of his beloved Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) to become FIDE Director General. The ACP recently held elections and now has a board of 11, including long-term member Pavel Tregubov, as well as photographer Maria Emelianova and tournament organiser, arbiter and ACP Chairman Yuri Garrett, who commented that “We’re not against FIDE, but we evaluate what FIDE has done.”

GERMANY – Various clubs around Germany normally host each Bundesliga weekend, but for the midway weekend of the season (1–3 March), all 15 top-flight teams made their way to Berlin’s Maritim Hotel. Entering round 9 Baden-Baden and Solingen were neck and neck on 14 points, but with Solingen having played a match more, the odd number of teams this season explained by the late withdrawal of Aachen.

While Solingen disposed of Düsseldorf 6–2 and Hofheim 4½–3½, Baden-Baden, looking for their thirteenth title in fourteen seasons, were to drop two crucial points. They only edged past Deizisau 4½–3½, Fabiano Caruana and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave losing on the top two boards, to Peter Leko and Gata Kamsky respectively. Never underestimate a former world championship challenger! Fortunately for the defending champions, Vishy Anand and Levon Aronian won on 3 and 4, as did Radosław Wojtaszek on board 6, the rest of their stellar line-up drawing, namely Peter Svidler, Richard Rapport and Arkadij Naiditsch.

If you thought Guildford were strong in the 4NCL, think again. However, money and high ratings can’t always buy success, all eight boards in the Baden-Baden vs Hockenheim match being drawn, David Howell holding out on bottom board(!) in some 136 moves and with rook against Naiditsch’s rook and bishop. More surprisingly, Viernheim then took a point off the champions, Anton Korobov crushing Anand and Naiditsch losing to Igor Kovalenko, with reserves Francisco Vallejo Pons and Etienne Bacrot saving Baden-Baden’s blushes on the bottom two boards.

While Michael Adams was absent for Baden-Baden, the weekend falling just before the trek to Astana for the World Team Championship, David Howell and Luke McShane did play in Berlin. The former scored a pretty respectable 2/3, while the latter warmed up well for Kazakhstan, racking up 2½/3 on top board for Werder Bremen, gradually outplaying Nils Grandelius and Ivan Salgado Lopez.

HOLLAND – Simon Williams returned to Amsterdam for one of his favourite tournaments held at Café Batavia 1920 (1–10 March). This 10-player all-play-all featured an innovative new format. Ahead of each round – the classical game played with 40 in 90 plus 30, with a 30-second increment – each set of players had an hour to find a winner at blitz, with two 5+3 games being followed, if necessary, by an Armageddon encounter. Only the classical games counted for rating, norm purposes and the main prizes (€500 first prize), but as well as €150 prizes for the best game and best endgame, there was also a separate prize fund for the new combined score system (€150 for first). There a classical win was worth two points, with the outcome of the blitz only coming into play in the event of a draw. Then the loser of the blitz would score just half a point, the winner a whole one.

Whilst we suspect that many readers, not least our associate editor, John Saunders, will be fascinated by the new system being trialled, the annual Café Batavia tournament always generates plenty of exciting games, both in the main tournament and amongst the daily onlookers, with the likes of local residents GMs Yasser Seirawan and Jan Smeets being seen playing blitz. Moreover, heading into the final round, any one of seven players could still have finished first. In the end only IM Arthur Pijpers could reach 5½/9

(+2 =7), half a point ahead of IM Max Warmerdam, Rick Lahaye, GM David Arutinian and FM Jasel Lopez.

Pijpers finished top too with 10½/18 in the combined standings, the next three players above scoring 9½, 9 and 8½ points respectively, but Lopez only made 7½, enabling three of the players who finished on just 50% in the classical games to overtake him with 8 combined points, namely Simon Williams, FM Felix Meissner and IM Koen Leenhouts.

A.Pijpers-R.Lahaye Amsterdam 2019 *Sicilian Najdorf*

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♙g5 ♘bd7 7 ♙c4 ♖a5
8 ♖d2 e6 9 0-0-0 ♙e7 10 ♘b1 h6
11 ♙e3 ♘e5?!

11...♖c7? would run into 12 ♙xe6! fxe6 13 ♘xe6 ♖c6 14 ♘xg7+, but the previously-played 11...♘g4 shouldn’t be too bad for Black.

12 ♙b3 b5?! 13 f4!

White is more than happy to sacrifice e4 to blow open lines for his better developed forces.

13...b4 14 ♘a4

14 fxe5 bxc3 15 ♖e1 dxe5 16 ♘c6 and even 14 ♘d5!? came strongly into contention too. The opening has clearly not been a success for Black.

14...♘xe4 15 ♖e2



Simon Williams in action at Café Batavia where each round kicked off with a mini-blitz match!



15...♔d7?

The ♔g5 Najdorf is a line where neither side can usually afford to be imprecise. Already this could have been a decisive mistake. 15...♔d7 16 f5 e5 17 ♕xf7! ♖xf7 18 ♖h5+ ♗f8 19 ♗e6+ ♗g8 might have looked scary, but trying to prove a definite advantage here for White is not such an easy task.

16 fxe5 ♕xa4 17 ♗xe6!?

Certainly played in the right spirit for the tournament and its environs, but there was nothing whatsoever wrong with the simple 17 ♕xa4+ ♖xa4 18 ♖g4, since Black shouldn't survive after 18...d5 19 ♖xg7 ♗f8 20 ♗hf1.

17...fxe6 18 ♖h5+ ♗d8 19 ♕xa4 ♖xa4

White enjoys a strong initiative for his piece, but precision is still required lest Black launch a timely counterattack with ...♗c3+.

20 exd6 ♕f6 21 ♕b6+ ♗c8 22 ♗he1 ♖c6 23 ♖g4?

23 d7+ ♗b7 24 ♕g1! followed by ♖g4 is the silicon's typically calm method to maintain some advantage.

23...♗c3+?

Oh, so tempting, but here the machine draws attention to 23...♖xb6 24 ♗xe4 h5!, a key resource to interfere with both ♗xb4 and the threat of a discovery after ♗xe6. Following 25 ♖xe6+ (25 ♖h3? ♗a7 26 ♗xe6 ♗d7 should be enough for Black to win) 25...♗b8 26 ♖b3 a5 27 d7 ♗d8 White's mighty Delroy and much safer king position appear to offer him enough, but not more than enough compensation.

24 bxc3 ♖xb6 25 d7+



25...♗d8?

25...♗b7 26 ♗xe6 ♖c5 27 ♖e4+ ♗c7 28 ♗d5! ♖xc3! (28...♖g1+? 29 ♗b2 ♕xc3+ 30 ♗b3 ♖b1+ 31 ♗c4 ♖xa2+ 32 ♗d3 wins) 29 ♗xf6! gxf6 30 ♗d4 would have left Black suffering, despite his extra

rook, but simply had to be tried.

26 ♗xe6 ♖b5 27 c4!

The line-closing advance Lahaye might well have missed. 27...♖b7 28 ♗xf6! b3 29 axb3 gxf6 30 ♖g7 1-0

There's simply nowhere for the black rook to run in view of 30...♗c7 31 d8♖+.

And was the new scoring system a success? Well, the Ginger GM was certainly a fan, Simon commenting that: "The new time format was a brave and exciting way to avoid the problem of draws. Something like this could well be the future; blitz is a very good way to try and make chess more exciting and attractable to a bigger audience, yet this system should also keep 'classical' chess fans happy."

S.Williams-J.Van der Wiel

Amsterdam (blitz) 2019

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗c3 ♕e7 5 ♕g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♕f4

An AlphaZero-approved retreat in such positions, but it's not 'Harry the h-pawn' which Williams is about to push, but rather 'Garry the g-pawn'.

7..b6 8 g4! ♗b7 9 g5 hxg5 10 ♗xg5 ♗bd7?

Far too slow. 10...dxc4 would have been consistent with Black's fianchetto.

11 ♗g1 c5 12 ♖f3!

The Ginger GM must have been delighted as already White enjoys a most fearsome attack.

12...♗e8 13 0-0-0 cxd4 14 exd4 ♖c8

15 ♖h3 ♗f8 16 ♕e5 dxc4 17 ♕e2 b5



With four pieces in the attack and the rook on d1 waiting in the wings, it's time to crash through:

18 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 19 ♗xg7+! ♗xg7 20 ♗g1+ ♗g6 21 ♕h5 ♗h8 22 ♗xg6+ ♗f8 23 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 24 ♗xf6+ ♗e7 25 ♗f7+ ♗d6 26 ♖g3+ ♗c6 27 ♕f3+ ♗b6 28 ♗xb7+ 1-0

IRELAND – David Howell and Nigel Short were the top seeds at the Bunratty Masters (18-20 February), but the latter drew too many games, while the former overpressed against Matthew Turner, who found himself leading on 4/4 heading into the Sunday. It was then McShane's turn to overpress in a level ending against the ever solid and highly practical Turner, but he somehow saved himself after teeing up a cheapo.

L.McShane-M.Turner

Bunratty 2019



Black now needed to prepare ...♗b1, but failed to spot the danger.

52...♗b1? 53 ♗e8+ ♗f5 54 ♗xe4!

McShane had long been operating on just the 15-second increment per move and finds the tactic. Now 54...♕a5 55 ♗d4 ♗d1 would still have drawn, and if 56 ♗d5+ ♗e4 57 ♗xa5 ♗xf3, whereas Turner's counter-tactic was to come up short.

54...♗xf2? 55 ♗xf2 ♗b2+ 56 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 57 ♕xd2 ♗xe4 58 ♗g3 h4+ 59 ♗f2 f5 60 ♕c1

Black will slowly but surely lose all his remaining pawns.

60...♗d4 61 ♕g5 ♗c3 62 ♗e1 ♗c2 63 ♕d2 ♗b3 64 ♗d1 ♗c4 65 ♕g5 ♗d4 66 ♗d2 ♗e4 67 ♕xh4 f4 68 ♕e1 ♗d4 69 ♕f2+ ♗e4 70 ♕b6 ♗f3 71 h4 ♗g4 72 ♕f2 1-0

McShane went on to draw a rather messy final-round encounter with IM Adam Hunt, which enabled Mark Hebden to catch him up, the 61-year-old rolling back the years as he held Short ahead of outplaying Simon Williams. However, after two draws, McShane would win the third blitz play-off game to claim his second Bunratty title, some 21 years after his first. Overall the weekend congress was once again a huge success, attracting some 346 players to the Bunratty Castle Hotel, with Ciaran Quinn winning the Challengers with 5½/6, Muhd Asyr Khairil racking up a full house in the Major, and Theo Wallace winning the Minor title after a play-off with Sean Horan.

RUSSIA – The Cosmos Hotel had to be evacuated during the opening round of the Aeroflot Open (20-27 February). Along with those in cinemas, shopping centres and metro stations, the chess players had to troop out into the cold after anonymous bomb threats were made to the authorities. Open A was typically strong, featuring 39 players rated over 2600, with the halfway leader in the clubhouse Krishnan Sasikiran with 5/5. However, while the Indian international faltered, losing to the young Armenian Grandmaster Haik Martirosyan, the surprise package of the tournament, the long-time Estonian no.1 Kaiko Kulaots, did not.

His rating having fallen to 2542 just before the tournament, Kulaots could actually have switched to the B Open, but took his chance in the top section and boy was he not to regret it. Turning 43 the day after Aeroflot ended, the 62nd seed scored the finest result of his career as he edged out Martirosyan on tie-break.

Leading Scores: 1-2 Kaido Kulaots (EST), Haik Martirosyan (ARM) 7, 3 Krishnan Sasikiran (IND) 6½, 4-9 Wang Hao, Wei Yi (both CHN), Maksim Chigaev, Ernesto Inarkiev, Alexey Sarana (all RUS), David Anton Guijarro (ESP) 6.

Kulaots began by crushing Parham Maghsoodloo as Black and would follow up by winning with the same colour over Alireza Firouzja, Daniil Dubov and Wei Yi, while drawing his first four Whites. The two hugely talented young Iranians were possibly guilty of underestimating him, but overall Kulaots simply played very well, reminding us that a 2550 GM can beat most players on their day. He even finished by finally winning as White, outcalculating Denis Khismatullin at the key moment ahead of displaying further fine technique.

A.Firouzja-K.Kulaots Moscow 2019 Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 h3 e6 7 g4 ♗fd7 8 g5

Accepting the challenge. White now finds himself in one of the more critical and dangerous lines of the Keres Attack, albeit a tempo down due to having to start with 6 h3. **8...b5 9 a3 ♗e7 10 h4 ♗b7 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 ♗d2**

12 ♗h5 would echo the Keres, but here too Black has decent counterplay after 12...♗c6 13 0-0-0 ♗c8 14 f4 ♗a5.

12...♗c6 13 ♗xc6

White could do with an improvement around here, but both 13 f4 ♗xd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗c8 15 0-0-0 ♗c5 and 13 0-0-0 ♗a5 14 f4 ♗c8 are far from definitely favouring him.

13...♗xc6 14 0-0-0?

14 ♗e2 feels a little meek, but keeping the white king away from the queenside would have been prudent.

14...♗b8!



A powerful deployment of the black



Kaido Kulaots wasn't mentioned in any of the Aeroflot previews, but was a deserving winner.

queen, menacing ...a5 without dropping the b-pawn. Firouzja does his best to immediately counter on the kingside, but already White's attack appears the less potent.

15 f3

15 h5 a5 16 ♗d5!? would have been desperate, but quite possibly had to be tried.

15...a5 16 g6!? b4!

With a thematic central strike next up, Black can even afford to ignore White's aggressive machinations.

17 ♗b1 d5 18 gxf7+ ♗xf7 19 ♗h3 ♗f8

19...♗e5!? and if 20 ♗xe6 ♗c4 21 ♗d3 bxa3 would have been even stronger, but there's no need for any showboating from Black.

20 axb4 ♗xb4 21 c3 ♗e7 22 ♗g5 ♗d6

23 exd5 exd5 24 ♗he1 a4



Driving the final nail into White's coffin. The talented young Iranian has been completely outplayed.

25 ♗a3 ♗xa3 26 bxa3 ♗d6

Not only is a3 rather tender, but also f3 and even c3.

27 ♗c2 ♗b8 28 ♗b1 ♗g6+ 0-1

While 18-year-old Martirosyan may have felt a little unfortunate to miss out on tie-break, his day will surely come, but Kulaots may never again have such a fine tournament, from which he bagged not just some €18,000, but also qualified for the Dortmund Super-GM tournament in July.

USA – Not content with hosting the Cairns Cup (6-15 February) in the late winter months, the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis also put on both the Champions Showdown (20-24 February) and the Spring Classic, all made possible thanks to the extremely generous patronage of Rex Sinquefeld. The former saw the top five American players each face an international rival over three days of rapid and then two days of blitz chess, the 12 rapid encounters being worth two points each, the 24 blitz games just one.

These days a much improved speed player, Fabiano Caruana simply proved too strong for Pentala Harikrishna, winning 35½-12½, despite resigning one of the blitz games in a winning position. Hikaru Nakamura also proved too much for Jan-Krzysztof Duda to cope with, taking the honours with a 29½-18½ victory, but the visitors did also win a fairly one-sided match in the Champions Showdown, as Richard Rapport's creativity proved too much for Sam Shankland to cope with, the Hungarian no.1 triumphing 31½-16½. Elsewhere Wesley So beat David Navara 28-20, while in the closest contest, the USA's latest acquisition, Leinier Dominguez, narrowly went down 22½-25½ to Veselin Topalov.

Gawain Jones was a late withdrawal from the Spring Classic (2-10 March), to the benefit of the English team, with the A Group won for the second year in a row by 18-year-old Jeffery Xiong, who made an undefeated 6/9 to edge out Ilya Nyzhnyk by half a point.

It wasn't a good event for the veterans, as making a rare tournament appearance, Rustam Kasimdzhanov finished second last on '-2', just ahead of Vassily Ivanchuk who failed to win a single game. In contrast, 20-year-old Jinshi Bai from China, whom readers might recall doing quite well in the Open at the London Chess Classic back in 2014, won four games en route to victory in the B Group at Saint Louis.

Next up in Saint Louis and drawing to a conclusion as this issue arrives through the letter box, the U.S. Championships.

Young Stars Shine

Bob Jones reports from the East Devon Congress held at Exeter's Corn Exchange

This popular event attracts many of the same faces year on year, but there can often be a sprinkling of newcomers to add to the mix, as was the case in 2017 when John Nunn entered at the last minute.

There were no Super-GM elder statesmen this year (9-10 March), but there were several first-time visitors among the younger age bracket that produced interest. 20-year-old and top-graded Will Claridge-Hansen, for example, recently arrived in Exeter from Chesham, Bucks, to read History at the University. Another was Shreyas Royal, who hit the headlines in the popular press last year when his father's work permit was due to expire, with the prospect of being forced to return to India. After much campaigning eventually the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, relented and agreed that the country could ill-afford to lose the boy's talents, nor his father's as an IT consultant, allowing them to apply for a UK passport, which will shortly be settled. Whatever the merit or otherwise of Shreyas's dodgy sobriquet of last year in the press of "the world's best 9 year old", a grade of 186 at that tender age is not to be sniffed at.

The pair make for an interesting compare-and-contrast exercise, being, as they are, at opposite ends of the junior chess trail. Will feels he has achieved enough in the past decade to satisfy himself for now – he's overtaken his father's grade (210), won a British title (Under-14), and represented his country in the Glorney Cup, etc. He's had a go at most of the junior tournaments and championships on the circuit, and would now like to ease off a bit and just enjoy playing for pleasure in local tournaments, like this one.

Shreyas, on the other hand, at just 10 is only at the beginning of his decade-long trail for honours in junior chess, and probably at senior level long before he's 20. His father, Jitendra Singh, explains how he set off by letting his son try all sorts of different sports and games, and it was the boy himself who felt a natural affinity for chess and wished to pursue that particular pastime. At the moment, mum and dad are happy to take him around the country at weekends to events like this, just for the experience of meeting players of all ages and experience. How far Shreyas climbs up the ladder of success remains to be seen, and will depend on how he responds to the increasingly tough challenges he meets on the way. At the moment though, the signs are looking very good indeed.

So how did they both fare in Exeter? With a grade of 222 Claridge-Hansen could have



Exeter undergraduate Will Claridge-Hansen moves against Exeter-educated John Stephens.

been expected to finish first or first equal, but in the fourth round he had to contend with that mercurial IM Jack Rudd, whose brain seems to work at speeds most of us can only imagine. Consequently, like many of Jack's opponents, Will got short of time in a playable rook and pawn ending, and this, coupled with Jack's recent coaching sessions with endgame supremo, Keith Arkell, tipped the balance in favour of the older player. So Will had to settle for second place on 4/5. Nevertheless, he was happy with this quick win in round 3 and kindly penned some quick notes.

W.Claridge-Hansen - J.Tambini Exeter 2019



Black has somewhat underestimated White's attack, which now runs:

18 ♖g5 g6

Forced, but very weakening.

19 ♜e4! ♟f8 20 ♜xe6!

So if 20...fxe6 21 ♜xe6#. 20 ♜h4 h5 21 g4 was also winning.

20...♞e8 21 ♞xc6! 1-0

With ♜d4 to follow, this is definitely winning.

In strong company at the top end of the Open, Shreyas scored 3/5. If he wanted to meet experience, he certainly found it in the fifth and final round when he was paired against John Wheeler. Born in Plymouth almost 80 years ago, John has been a stalwart player and organiser in Westcountry chess since childhood, and would have been more than happy to put the boy through his paces. The endgame was terrific to watch as John had a mate in one lined up, but Shreyas didn't panic, kept his cool and used his resources in a very open opposition to just keep the initiative and force mate himself a few moves later. What players! What a game chess can be when two enterprising players meet head on and ignore their 70 years age difference.

Shreyas chose it as his best game of the weekend and happily annotated it for us.

Notes by Shreyas Royal

S.Royal-J.Wheeler

Exeter 2019

Queen's Gambit Declined

**1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5
5 ♟g5 c6 6 ♟f3 ♟e7 7 e3 ♟f5 8 ♟d3**

♙xd3

8... ♖e4 is also possible.

9 ♖xd3 ♗bd7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖ab1!

The main idea for White in these type of positions (the Carlsbad structure) is to play the minority attack, i.e. b4, a4 and b5.

11... ♖e8 12 b4 a6

Or 12...b5 13 a4! a6 14 a5!, preventing Black's knights from getting to c4 via b6. In the meantime he has a weakness on c6 which I can double or triple on the c-file against.

13 a4 ♗e4 14 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 15 ♗d2!? f5!

16 ♗e2 ♗xd2 17 ♖xd2 ♗f6 18 ♗g3 g6?! 19 ♖fc1 h5?!

Creating some weaknesses.

20 b5 h4 21 ♗e2 axb5 22 axb5 ♗e4 23 ♖e1



23...c5?

Black weakens his d5-pawn, freeing d4 for my knight and allowing me to control the a1-h8 diagonal. 23...♖ec8 is a better try, although White is still clearly better after 24 bxc6 bxc6 25 ♗c3!.

24 dxc5 ♖ec8

24...♗xc5? 25 ♗f4 wins.

25 c6 bxc6 26 bxc6 ♖a6 27 ♖b7! ♖c7?!

If 27...♖d6 28 ♖d7 or 27...♖e6 28 ♗d4.

28. ♖b8+ ♗h7 29. ♗d4 ♖a2 30. ♗b5 ♙xf2

30...♗xf2 would allow 31 ♖c3!.

31 ♗xc7 ♖g5 32 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 33 ♗xf2?!



Youth versus experience is not such a rare sight in chess clubs up and down the land, but such a young player as Shreyas battling a much more experienced opponent is rare in an Open.

33 ♗d5! is probably better.

33...f4 34 ♗e6! fxe3+ 35 ♖g1 ♖f6

Or if 35...♖e5 36 c7 e2 37 ♖e1.

36 c7



Bob: White is on the verge of being mated (again!), but calculates that he has enough

time and initiative to keep control of the situation.

36...♖f2+ 37 ♗h1 e2 38 ♖h8+! ♗xh8 39 c8♖+ ♗h7 40 ♖d7+ ♗h6 41 ♖g7+ ♗h5 42 ♖h7+ 1-0

Resigns, in view of the unavoidable 42...♗g4 43 ♖xg6 mate.

After the game, Shreyas's father explained that his family were numerologists, not uncommon in India. In numerology it is believed that manipulating the digits involved in a child's time, day, week, month and year of birth will give clues as to their inborn talents and probable future career. In Shreyas's case the parents went to an expert who, after learning of the details, did some calculations and determined that his names should start with the letters 'R' and 'S'. The discussion continued and they settled firstly on Royal, one of the words that the English donated to Indian culture, and then agreed on Shreyas, meaning 'supreme'. All of which might account for how he has become, at such a young age, a supreme player of the Royal Game. It was written in the stars!

Prizewinners:

- Open:** 1 Jack Rudd (Barnstaple) 4½/5,
2 Will Claridge-Hansen (Exeter University) 4,
3-7 Jasper Tambini (Surbiton), Paul Hampton (Seaton), Graham Bolt (Exeter), David Littlejohns (Taunton), Mike Stinton-Brownbridge (Plymouth) 3½.
- Major:** 1 Christof Brixel (Hammersmith) 5,
2-3 Sam Cotterill (Coventry), George Lekoudis (Hastings) 4.
- Minor:** 1 Ray Hunt (Sidmouth) 4½,
2-5 Paul Foster (Medway), Charles Doidge (Teignmouth), Colin Thompson (Chippenham), John Harris (Forest of Dean) 4.



Shreyas pictured with his parents, father Jitendra and mother Anju. The 10-year-old finished just outside the prizes in the East Devon Open, but did play a model Minority Attack.



Home News

BELFAST – Ahead of venturing down to County Claire for the Bunratty Congress (see p.48), Luke McShane gave a simul at Belfast's Stormont Hotel on February 20th. Leading Strand CC member Gabor Horvath managed to win, with the Civil Service's Danny Roberts securing an honourable draw as the leading English GM won the remaining 27 boards on what was a memorable night for chess in Ulster.

BLACKPOOL – Mark Hebden and Joseph McPhillips each won £550 as they shared first prize in arguably Britain's most competitive weekend event overall, namely the Blackpool Congress (8-10 March).

Open: 1-2 Mark Hebden (Leicester), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4½/5, 3-9 Ismael Molano Lafiente (Spain), Phil Watson (Bradford), Matthew Parsons (Huddersfield), Stuart White (Bearsden), Peter Gayson (Dunstable), Roy Ellames (Lytham St Annes), Elliot Frew (Troon) 3½.

Major: 1-2 Nick Burrows (Cowley), Joshua Pink (Stockport) 4½, 3-6 Robert Newton (Rochdale), Chris Doran (Chester), Phil Bull (Wolverhampton), Ravi Wariyar (Forest Hall) 4.

Intermediate: 1 Martin Brejter (Edinburgh) 5, 2 Ralph Stirrat (Cumbernauld) 4½, 3-4 Robert Dean (Pudsey), George Harman (Worsley) 4.

Minor: 1 Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 2 David Teague (Harrogate) 4½, 3-7 James Rigby (Liverpool), Pawel Szutkowski (Spalding), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Jade Stirrup (3Cs), John Illingworth (Newham) 4.

Standard: 1 Robert Arthurton (Skegness) 5, 2 Phillip Shaughnessy (Urmston) 4½, 3-8 Jeff Foy (Liverpool), John MacDonald (Kings Head), George Vizokai (Maddocks), Kevin Waterman (Hartlepool), Nick Holmes (Shrewsbury), David Scorer (Clitheroe) 4.

BRISTOL – Keith Arkell was held to a draw in the final round by Chris Beaumont, but that ensured outright first for the weekend tournament expert in the FIDE-rated Open at the Bristol Winter Congress (15-17 February). *Leading scores:* 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 4½/5, 2-3 Chris Beaumont (Bristol), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4.

COVENTRY – The Warwickshire Open Championships took place in Coventry (22-24 February), with Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow winning the Open for the second successive year, while Henrik Stepanyan retained his Warwickshire title.

Open: 1 Jonah Willow 4½/5, 2-4 Aditya Munshi (both Nottingham), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Ranesh Ratnesan (Surbiton) 4.

Under-1975: 1 Graham Ashcroft (Preston) 4½, 2-5 Rohan Pal (Birmingham), Ben Graff (Kenilworth), Adithya Pramod Paleri (Wimbledon), Neil Homer (Northampton) 4.

Under-140: 1-4 Chinmay Monga

(Birmingham), John Conway (Coventry), Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Tomas Fabik (Rugby) 4.

Under-110: 1 John Rayner (Nuneaton) 4½, 2-3 Ben Larkin (Stratford), Kajus Mikalajunas (Leicestershire) 4.

DONCASTER – The popular Doncaster Congress once again took place at Hall Cross Academy (22-24 February).

Open: 1-2 Peter Shaw (Wakefield), Ali Jaunooby (Denton) 4/5, 3-6 John Anderson (Lowestoft), Chris Izod (Jesmond), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Leo Keely (Huddersfield) 3½.

Major: 1 Paul Robson (Chester-le-Street) 4, 2-6 Jim Davis (Worksop), Mark Collinson (Hull), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Tim Turner (Beverley), Karl Potter (Syston) 3½.

Intermediate: 1-5 Steven Watson, Phil Bawden (both Hull), Noel Stewart (York), Andrew Allen (Worksop), Chris Tinker (Wakefield) 4.

Minor: 1 Farrell Clifford (Doncaster) 4½, 2-7 David Dunne (Nottingham), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Dave Peardon (Hetton Lyons), Chris Stratford (Huddersfield), Roger Walker (Belper), Chris Fraser (Spondon) 4.

GOODWICK – The Dyfed Congress once again took place at the Fishguard Bay Hotel (22-24 February). Victory in the Open went to regular competitor FM Sven Zeidler, while one of the Under-1700 grading prizes went to 14-year-old Cardiff schoolgirl Susanna Fraser who performed some 350 points above her rating.

Open: 1 Sven Zeidler (Dezives) 5/5, 2 Gerry Heap (Carmarthen) 4, 3-9 Paul Byway (Hertford), Iolo Jones (Cardigan), Adam May, Alan Young (both Llanelli), Mike Waddington (Dorchester), John Waterfield (Caerleon), Howard Williams (Cardigan) 3½.

Major: 1 Scott Hammett (Haverfordwest) 5, 2 Ben Brewer (Cardigan) 4, 3-4 Paul Scott (Abergavenny), Robert Narayan-Taylor (Carmarthen) 3½.

LEYLAND – The Leyland Rapidplay saw a three-way tie for first in the top, Under-195 section on February 24th.

Major: 1-3 Phil Armstrong (Oldham), Peter Jowett (Preston), Graham Dobson (Lancaster) 4½/6.

Intermediate: 1 Phil Ramsey (Southport) 5½, 2 Kevin Winter (Bradford) 5, 3 Anthony Tatar (Hoylake) 4½.

Minor: 1 Edward Jackson (3Cs) 5½, 2-3 Andrew de Santos (Preston), David Willey (Carlisle) 4½.

LONDON – Former Latvian Minister of Finance and ECU Vice-President Dana Reizniece-Ozola gave a simul at the London Latvian House on February 15th. The event raised money for Latvian charities and saw the WGM finish with an impressive +13 =2 -0.

On 2nd March the 137th Varsity match took place at the RAC Club, Pall Mall.

Featuring Hou Yifan on top board, Oxford out-rated Cambridge by on average almost 200 points per board, but despite having white the Chinese star was fairly comfortably held by Matthew Wadsworth. Isaac Sanders, Filip Mihov and at the death Daniel Abbas won for the Dark Blues, as they were pushed all the way by a determined Light Blue side and only eventually got home 4½-3½. Both Gwilym Price and Gustavo Leon Cazares defeated higher-rated opposition for Cambridge who still lead overall by 59-56, with 22 draws.

TELFORD – A regular 4NCL venue also hosted this year's British Universities Chess Association (BUCA) Championships (23-24 February), in which Imperial College, London triumphed in both the Open and separate Plate competition. Meanwhile University College London won the Bowl, but the capital was denied a clean sweep as the University of the West of England, Bristol triumphed in the Shield.

Imperial's first team was Yeoh Li Tian, Constantin Müller, Aron Eu Wen Teh, and Adam A. Taylor. Their top board, a 2522-rated young Malaysian IM, certainly knows how to attack as seen in the following game:

M.Fernandez-Yeoh Li Tian Southampton I vs Imperial I *King's Indian Defence*

In classic reversed KIA and *AlphaZero*-approved fashion Black had rammed the white kingside with his h-pawn and now struck. Note too how White had been far too slow to open queenside lines for counterplay.



23...♙xd4!

The decisive blow is struck not on the kingside, but in the centre where Black is about to enjoy two highly dangerous and mobile pawns.

24 exd4 ♜xd4 25 ♖d2 ♜f3 26 ♗e2 d4 27 ♙c1 e3 28 ♙xe3 dxc3 29 ♗d1 ♗f6 30 ♙d3 ♙xd3 31 ♗xd3 ♗xe3! 0-1

Finishing in style by removing the guardian of f2.

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The Modernized Najdorf

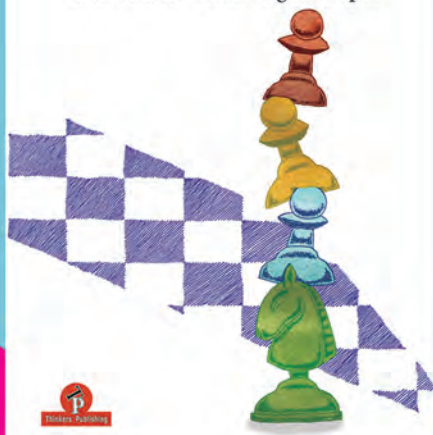


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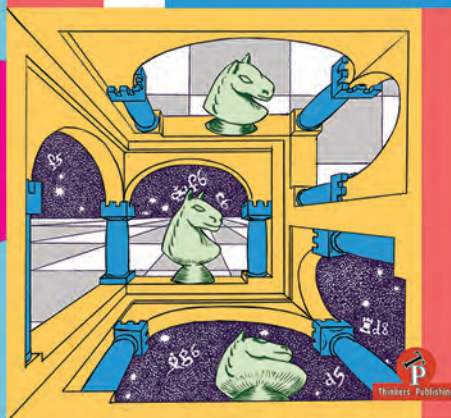
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Volume 1

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The Tactics Bible

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Always One Move Ahead





Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 37-39)

1) Gayson-Doherty

1 ♖d8+! 1-0 1...♙xd8 2 ♜xe5+ wins the queen.

2) Okhai-Alizada

1 ♖xg7! ♜e7 (1...♙xg7 2 ♜g3+ ♙f7 3 ♜f3 is equally crushing) 2 ♜xe6 ♜f7 3 ♜f3 1-0

3) Trueman-Cowan

1...♙a2! 2 ♜xa2 ♜xe1+ 3 ♙h2 ♜g3 0-1

4) Fridman-Tukhaev

1 ♜h7+! 1-0 1...♙xh7 2 ♜xf7+ ♙h6 3 ♜h1+ leads to mate.

5) Kovalev-Aditya

1 ♜h7+! ♙xh7 2 ♜xf6+ ♙g7 3 ♜xd7 left White with a decisive advantage in the endgame.

6) Kulon-De Verdier

1 ♙h8! (there's no good way for Black to cover g7) 1...♜xh8 2 ♜g7# 1-0

7) Obihara-Ingles

An elegant variation on back-rank mate: 1 ♜xh8+! ♙xh8 2 ♜f8+! ♜xf8 3 ♜xf8+ 1-0

8) Grachev-Lobanov

1 ♜b5! 1-0 White is winning a piece in view of 1...♜d7 2 ♜xb7! ♜xb7 3 ♜d6+ or 1...♜h2+ 2 ♜xh2 ♙xa6 3 ♜c7+.

9) Nakamura-Svane

1 ♜xf7! 1-0 By far the most crushing continuation, as shown by 1...♜xf7 2 d7+ ♜c7 3 d8# and 1...♜d5 2 ♜d4 ♜xf7 3 d7+ ♜c7 4 ♙xc7 ♙xc7 5 ♜e5+! ♙xd7 6 ♜d6+.

10) Houska-Buckley

1 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 (even 1...♜xe2 leaves Black clearly worse after 2 ♜c6 ♜d8 3 ♜d3) 2 ♜c6 ♜e8 3 ♜xa6 netted a pawn.

11) Collins-Brewis

Here Black, being the last to finish in a county match, agreed a draw, but 1...♙xh3! would have forced mate, and if 2 ♙xh3 ♜f5 3 ♙h2 ♜h5+ 4 ♙g1 ♜xh1#.

12) Paehtz-Kovalev

1...♜xf4! 2 ♜dc4 (or 2 ♜xf4 ♜xe5 3 ♜f2 ♜xe3 with an extra two pawns for Black) 2...♜xe5 3 ♜f3 ♜xf3 4 ♜xf3 ♜g7 left Black well on the path to victory.

13) Wake-Plumb

Rather than the game's 1 ♜e1, 1 ♜xc8+! ♜xc8 2 ♜xc8+ ♙h7 would have won, in view of the classic further combination 3 ♜h8+! ♙xh8 4 ♜f7+ and 5 ♜xd6.

14) Esipenko-Popov

1...♜c3?? 2 ♜c5+ 1-0 was the shocking end to the game. 1...♜c3? 2 axb4 ♜a3 cannot be better for Black, but 1...♜xa3+! 2 ♙f2 ♜c3 would have done the business.

15) Deepan-Sharma

1 ♜a7! ♜xc3 (1...♜xf7 2 ♜xf7+ ♙h8 3 ♜f5 ♙g8 4 ♜xd5+ ♙h8 5 ♜f7 is also pretty crushing, since Black cannot retreat his queen to e7 on account of mate, and even the engine's 1...♙h8 2 ♜f6!? ♜g8 leaves White with a virtually decisive attack after 3 ♜f5 ♜e7 4 ♜a4!, swinging round to d1) 2 ♜e7 1-0 2...♜xe7 3 ♜a8+ mates.

16) Esipenko-Keymer

1 ♜c4+! ♙h8 2 ♜xb5! ♜xb5 3 ♜d8 ♜e4+ 4 ♙a1 1-0

17) Steil Antoni-Kolbus

1...♜xe4! (1...♜h5 2 ♜g5 f6 3 ♜d2 g5 4 ♜f2 f4 should also favour Black, but isn't so clear-cut) 2 ♜g5? (2 ♜xg7 ♜xh4 3 ♜xh4 ♙xg7 4 dxe4 ♜xe2 5 ♜f2 ♜g4 6 exf5 g5 and then, say, 7 f6+ ♙h6 8 ♜f5+ ♜xf5 9 ♜xf5 b6 10 ♜e1 ♜ae8 11 ♜e7 ♙g6 would, however, leave Black clearly better) and now as well as the game's 2...♜d7 3 dxe4 ♜xe4, 2...f6 3 ♜f4 g5 4 ♜e1 ♜e8 would have left Black with a huge advantage.

18) Gukesh-Sharma

1 ♜g7+! (1 ♜b5! does the trick too, and if 1...♜xb5 2 ♜xe6+ ♙d8 3 ♜e7+! or 1...♙d8 2 ♜e3 ♜d6 3 ♜g5+ ♜xg5 4 ♜xg5+ ♜e7 5 ♜xe5) 1...♜xg7 2 ♜xe6+ ♙d8 (again, if 2...♜xe6 3 ♜xe6+ ♙d8 4 ♜e7+! ♜xe7 5 ♜xc8#) 3 ♜e7+ ♙e8 4 ♜d6+ ♙d8 5 ♜xc7+ ♜xc7 6 ♜xc7 ♙xc7 7 ♜f4+ 1-0

19) Kovalev-Kuipers

1 ♙xh7+! ♙xh7 2 ♜g4 1-0 2...f6 3 ♜h4+ ♙g8 (or 3...♙g6 4 ♜h5#) 4 ♜xe6+ ♜f7 5 ♜h3 leads to mate, as does 2 ♜h4+ ♙g8 3 ♜g4 f6 4 ♜xe6+ ♜f7 5 ♜xc8+.

20) Quillan-Movileanu

1 ♜f6+! (stronger than 1 f5 exf5 2 ♜g5 h6 3 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 4 ♜ae1, and especially 1 ♜f3 ♜e7) 1...gxf6 2 ♜f3 e5 3 ♜g3+ ♙h8 4 ♜h6 1-0

21) Garcia Trobat-Saric

1...♜f3! 0-1 The white queen is decisively overloaded in view of 2 gxf3 (or 2 ♜xe5 ♜xd2 3 gxf3 ♜ac8) 2...♜xf3+ 3 ♜xf3 ♜xd2 with too many extra pawns for Black. However, 1...♜f3+? 2 gxf3 ♜xf3 isn't check, so White can survive after 3 ♜d3.

22) Flores-Martinez Alcantara

1 ♜xe6?? ♜xe6 2 ♜xh6 was the game continuation, overlooking the painful 2...♜f7 (2...♜xg3?? 3 ♜xe6+ ♜f7 4 ♜xf6 would, however, win) 3 ♜e5 ♜d5! 4 ♜xf7 (even 4 ♜h8+ ♙xh8 5 ♜xf7+ ♙h7 6 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 leaves White a piece down) 4...♜e1+ 0-1 Instead, 1 ♜e5 would have favoured White or, even better, 1 ♜xh6!, and if 1...♜xg3 2 ♜xe6 gxf6 3 ♜xe7+ ♜d5 4 fxf3 ♜xb3 5 axb3 ♜c8 6 ♙f2 with decent chances to convert.

23) Urkedal-Arvola

1...♜xe4! (White survives after 1...♜g2+ 2 ♙e3 ♜d5+) 2 ♜xe4? (even 2 ♜g1 ♜f5 followed by ...♜d5 would leave White deep in trouble) 2...♜g2+ 3 ♙e3 (3 ♙f1 ♜g1+ 4 ♙f2 ♜g2+ 5 ♙e3 ♜h3+ is all over, in view of 6 ♙d2 ♜d3#) 3...♜h3+ 4 ♜f3 ♜d5+! 5 exd5 ♜e8+ 6 ♙f4 ♜h4+ 0-1

24) Harsha-Melkumyan

1 ♜xh7!! (the machine argues that even the calm 1 ♙g2! wins, and if 1...♜d7 2 ♜h5 followed by 3 ♜fh1) 1...♙xh7 2 ♙g2 ♜f4+! (as good a defence as any with the rook on g6 horribly placed) 3 ♙f3! (and not 3 gxf4?? ♜xf6) 3...♜h5 (3...♙g8 4 gxf4 ♜gxf6 5 gxf6 ♜xf6 6 ♜g1+ ♙f7 7 ♜h7+ ♙e8 8 f5 also wins) 4 ♜h1 ♜xf6 (or 4...♙g8 5 ♜xg6+ ♜g7 6 ♜h7+ ♙f8 7 ♜h8#) 5 gxf6 ♜xf6 6 ♜xh5+ ♙g7 7 ♜xf6+ (7 g4 would have been even stronger) 7...♜xf6+ 8 ♜f5 ♜a6 (White's king is in time after 8...♜xf5+ 9 exf5 ♙f6 10 ♙e4 b4 11 cxb4 c3 12 ♙d3) 9 ♜xe5 ♜a3 10 d6 ♜xc3+ 11 ♙e2 ♙f7 12 d7 ♜d3 13 ♜d5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♙e7 15 g4 1-0

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This Month's New Releases

Learn from Michal Krasenkow

Michal Krasenkow, 408 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £29.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.99**

Thinkers Publishing are, just like Elk and Ruby (see below), an innovative publisher working hard to bring fresh new titles to the chess public. They have several titles by players we do not often see in print. Books by Kamsky and Tukmakov are in the pipeline, but first there is this very interesting volume by the Polish Grandmaster, trainer and writer.

The book is in three main parts. The first (and smallest) provides a relatively brief overview of the author's life and chess career. The second offers 54 annotated games, all of which are instructive. They are arranged by theme rather than chronology. The third part presents 12 interesting endgames from the author's games.

Krasenkow is a talented player, but makes no secret of the fact that progress was not always smooth – "My path to the top was by no means a speedy ascent", despite having several sessions in his younger years with luminaries such as Smyslov, Dvoretsky, Zlotnik and Razuvaev. He writes of the struggle to "overcome the symbolic barrier of a 2600 rating!" – a feat achieved only in 1996 after numerous near misses in the region of 2595.

This is a very honest and refreshing appraisal of his struggle to reach the top of his game and it will make a good connection with the vast majority of readers who also find chess improvement to be very hard work. The theme continues when Krasenkow admits his failings: "Unfortunately, throughout my life, I could not bring myself to work on chess regularly enough" and: "Poor memory was also a big disadvantage. Yes, such a player can sometimes achieve success, but does he have a chance to reach the world's top?"

Nevertheless, despite – or because of – the struggle to makes significant progress – he reached one of the summits when he played in the 1997 FIDE World Championship, progressing well until being knocked out by Nigel Short, but still earning \$60,000 – his biggest-ever pay packet. "Never before, or later in my career, did I earn close to that amount in a single tournament."

One very positive aspect of the book is that the games will be very fresh to most readers. This became apparent when I looked at the section on 'Various and Memorable' games and found the encounter with Korchnoi was new to me, and a very interesting one it is too.

M.Krasenkow-V.Korchnoi

Essen 2002



Krasenkow may have expected 15...Bb5 here, as "exchanging light-squared bishops, was a good positional idea, when Black would have been close to equality, but what my opponent came up with was completely unexpected."

15...Bb5!? 16 dxe5 Bb6 "Hmm...has he overlooked a simple bishop lunge?"

17 Bb4

This looks strong, as 17...Re8 18 Bfd1 Bc8 19 Bd3 leads to "a clear advantage for White" and 17...Bxc4 turns out well for the first player also. Things were never simple with Korchnoi though and he had planned the extraordinary:

17...h5!?

"Well, I saw this move from the corner of my eye, but couldn't believe it was possible. Korchnoi plays without prejudice."

Black is (temporarily) winning a piece, but he is clearly going to find his king in need of special care.

18 Bxh5! Bxc4 19 Bfd1 Re8 20 Bd4



There are two intentions here: capturing



the knight and swinging the rook over to h4. Korchnoi slipped up with **20...b5?!** and after many adventures found himself in an endgame a pawn down, which Krasenkow was able to convert on the 53rd move.

The game demonstrates Krasenkow's style, which is combative and original. Sometimes, games presented and annotated by the world's very best players leave the reader with the impression that the winner was more or less in control throughout the game, but the games in this book are all genuine struggles, with all sorts of twists and turns.

Essentially a 'best games' collection, this is a book showing the gritty side of chess battles at a level just below the absolute top. As such, club players will be able to relate to the struggles and will derive comfort from understanding that even strong grandmasters have their faults and their games are not always as smooth as others would have you believe.

Sean Marsh

Smyslov on the Couch

Genna Sosonko, 200 pages

Elk and Ruby

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Sosonko follows up his books on Bronstein and Korchnoi with this new volume on Vasily Smyslov, which offers a completely new approach to the life and times of the great champion. There is only one chess game in this book and that is right at the end. It is Smyslov's own favourite and it was played when he was just 14. It was memorable to Smyslov as it was the first game of his to be published.

K.Gerasimov-V.Smyslov

Moskvoretsky District Ch., 1935



19...♗d3! 20 ♖xb6 ♗xh3! 21 ♕d4 ♕h2+
22 ♖h1 ♕xe5+ 0-1

Yes, it is a great finish – and one which impressed Mikhail Tal, but perhaps a strange one to choose from such a long and very successful career. Then Smyslov states his “Greatest success” came “at the Young Pioneers’ championship, when I won all eleven games. Not a single draw, not one!” A truly extraordinary choice for a player who played in three world title matches in the 1950s and who was still a serious candidate in the 1980s. It is quite typical of the eccentric nature of the seventh champion of the world.

Think of Smyslov’s games and one would immediately think of ‘harmony’, but what springs to mind when thinking of his personality? This is not so easy; he remained remarkably uncontroversial throughout his title battles with Botvinnik and anything written by Smyslov gives away very little about his own character.

Here we find a plethora of anecdotes and background information, derived from many years of discussions between writer and subject. Sosonko’s narrative does not follow a linear path; little stories come and go out of chronological sequence, almost as if Sosonko were relating them in person to the reader.

There are three sections: The Real Vasily Smyslov, Match Fixing in Zurich and the Soviet Chess School, and The Final Years. The middle section is somewhat tangential; it deals with Bronstein’s accusations that orders from ‘upstairs’ helped Smyslov win the 1953 Candidates Tournament. Bronstein still has many fans, but he was a very bitter man at times. Sosonko weaves in numerous other incidents from the Soviet days, but frankly they are not especially relevant to the Smyslov situation and would be better off as part of a separate book. There must be a great deal to reveal about the Karpov years, for example, when ex-world champions were careful not to disturb the peace.

Smyslov was a very eccentric character. He claims to have “organized the Kramnik–Topalov match in Elista” on the strength of an interview he gave to Radio Liberty. Other claims include strange forebodings of doom, including asking Spassky’s father-in-law to postpone a mountaineering expedition, only for disaster to strike when the man ignored the advice. These are the sort of stories which define the character of Smyslov. He appears rather detached from reality, inhabiting his only little world yet still believing himself to be somehow part of the bigger picture.

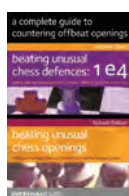
Smyslov remained dedicated to creating new chess studies right to the end, taking great pride in his compositions. Chess games took up less of his time, but there are interesting snippets here and there. “You know, Genna, Tal came to my place exactly a month before his death. It pained me to look at him. He was as sick as a dog. We started playing blitz, and he won every single game. Well, he won literally every position – where

he was better, when he worse – and all the endgames too.”

Elk and Ruby are doing a fine job in bringing out unusual and extremely interesting books. They have, for example, recently announced a forthcoming translation of Sally Landau’s autobiography, which promises to offer chess fans a lot of new material on another champion – for Sally was the first wife of Mikhail Tal.

Let’s be clear: one will not learn how to play better chess from *Smyslov on the Couch*; this is not an instructional book. It is, however, a gold mine of information on the real Vasily Smyslov, shining a bright light on one of the lesser-chronicled king of chess.

Sean Marsh



A Complete Guide to Countering Offbeat Openings

Andrew Greet & Richard Palliser, 528 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Everyman Chess continue to package up some of their classic works. The 1 e4 player could still do far worse than follow Andrew Greet’s recommendations against the likes of the Pirc and Scandinavian, with his *Beating Unusual Chess Defences: 1 e4* being joined under one cover by your Editor’s *Beating Unusual Chess Openings*, which offers a complete repertoire for Black against everything apart from 1 d4 and 1 e4.

Also just released from Everyman is *A Complete Repertoire Based on 1 b3 and 1...b6* (416 pages, paperback, RRP £19.99, Subscribers £17.99), which teams up Christian Bauer’s *Play 1...b6* with Jonathan Tait and Byron Jacobs’ *Nimzo–Larsen Attack*.



An Attacking Repertoire with 1.d4! Vol.1

Nick Pert, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 35 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The first of a two-part 1 d4 and 2 c4 repertoire for ChessBase from the strong English Grandmaster and experienced coach. Unsurprisingly Pert recommends the Botvinnik and Kasparov-approved approach to the Exchange QGD, featuring an early ♖ge2 and f2–f3. The QGA is also dealt with in aggressive fashion by 3 e4, but the choice of the Exchange Slav may raise a few eyebrows. Pert concludes his largely pretty detailed coverage by presenting a fairly quick repertoire against the likes of the Albin and Chigorin.

An Attacking Repertoire with 1.d4! Vol.2

Nick Pert, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 50 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The bulk of the second stage of Pert’s repertoire consists of his tackling both the Nimzo–Indian, where 4 ♗c2 is the weapon of choice, and Black’s various Benoni systems. As on the first DVD, coverage is clear and pretty detailed, but prospective buyers should be aware that the Grünfeld and King’s Indian do not feature at all. As such, we wonder if a third DVD might be in the pipeline.

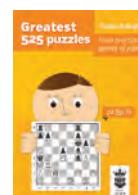
Do note that both *Attacking Repertoire* DVDs may be purchased together from Chess & Bridge for the special price of £52.00 or just £46.80 for Subscribers.

ChessBase Magazine 188

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest edition of *CBM* is for ‘March/April 2019’. The emphasis is on Wijk aan Zee, from which Anand, Giri, Nielsen, Svidler and even Robert Hübner have annotated games. Elsewhere, in video format, Daniel King advocates Black meets the King’s Gambit with 2...exf4 3 ♖d3 d5!?, while Romain Edouard enthusiastically recommends 2 ♕g5 against the Dutch.



Greatest 525 Puzzles

Csaba Balogh, 216 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The Hungarian Grandmaster continues to turn out puzzle books for Chess Evolution, his latest collection of 525 positions featuring some quite tricky ones and with all the games played last year.

Marin’s English Love – A Complete Repertoire for White after 1.c4 Vol.1

Mihail Marin, PC-DVD;

running time: 7 hours, 13 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

It’s been ten years now since Mihail Marin first began his series of repertoire works for Quality Chess devoted to the English. As such, this second new two-part DVD series from ChessBase is likely to be welcome by all ‘Marin disciples’ of 1 c4. This DVD covers both 1...e5 and a King’s Indian approach from Black. Against the former, Marin remains true to 2 g3, but does have some new ideas and approaches, such as with 2...♗f6 3 ♕g2 c6 4 ♗f3!?

Marin’s English Love – A Complete Repertoire for White after 1.c4 Vol.2

Mihail Marin, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 37 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Against 1...e6, 1...c6 and 1...c5 Marin

remains true to a 2 g3 approach. This DVD once again blends a good description of the key ideas with some fairly cutting-edge theory, not least in the main line of the Reti and the tabiya after 1 c4 ♖f6 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 d5 4 ♖f3.

As with the Pert DVDs both volumes of *Marin's English Love* may be purchased together from Chess & Bridge for the special price of £52.00 or just £46.80 for Subscribers.



Master Class Volume 11 – Vladimir Kramnik

ChessBase PC-DVD;

running time: 9 hours, 36 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The *Master Class* team of Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller, Yannick Pelletier and Oliver Reeh once again team up well to examine all aspects of the play of one of the greats of the royal game, namely the recently retired 14th world champion, Vladimir Kramnik. The DVD contains all of Kramnik's games, as well as 399 interactive training positions taken solely from those games. Meanwhile the video presentations examine such facets as Kramnik's contribution to the Berlin and his endgame technique.



Masterworks: Rare and Beautiful Chess Sets of the World

D.L. McClain (ed.), 232 pages, hardback

SPECIAL PRICE £19.99

Former *New York Times* chess columnist Dylan Loeb McClain has long been a fan of a beautiful chess set and in this hardback work presents some of the rarest, most artistic and most expensive sets ever made. The likes of Jon Crumiller supply detailed insights while throughout the photography is of a very high quality.



Play the Alekhine Defence

Alexei Kornev, 288 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

It's been a while since we saw a repertoire work devoted to the Alekhine. Russian Grandmaster Kornev believes that 1 e4 ♖f6

is an ideal weapon for both faster time controls and for playing for a win against lower-graded opposition. After 2 e5 ♗d5 3 d4 d6 Kornev advocates both 4 c4 ♗b6 5 exd6 cxd6 and 4 ♖f3 g6.



The Big Book of Chess Tactics

Istvan Pongo, 800 pages, hardback

RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**

This is a new version from Modern Chesspartner Publisher of a Hungarian chess classic, an extremely thorough work devoted to just about every imaginable tactic you can think of. The systematic coverage is divided into three main parts: tactics which win material, defensive tactics and the various types of mate. Those who really like tactics and beautiful moves will certainly appreciate many of the great number of positions within.



The Bishop: Danger on the Diagonal

Sergey Kasparov, 248 pages, paperback

RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

It's clearly a good time of year for new series, with the Belorussian Grandmaster beginning his 'The Power of the Pieces' by looking firstly at the bishop for Russell Enterprises. The 140 or so game fragments unsurprisingly include ones connected to such topics as attacking with opposite-coloured bishops and the French bishop, while Kasparov also looks at various material imbalances, such as two bishops against bishop and knight.



The Chess Gamer Volume 1: The Awakening 1989-1996

Gata Kamsky, 440 pages, paperback

RRP £30.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £27.85**

Kudos to Thinkers Publishing for convincing the American chess legend to publish with them, especially when we learn that "This is going to be my only work on chess, a subject that I feel I have learned enough about to share with you some of my knowledge." In this first of two volumes Kamsky covers his early chess life and the

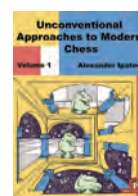
best games of his first chess career, since he would retire after losing the FIDE world championship match to Anatoly Karpov in 1996.

The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Essential Rook Endgames

Adrian Mikhalechishin, 320 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Chess Evolution continue to publish their FIDE-approved definite endgame series, with the latest volume covering some of the most important of all the endings, rook endgames. Mikhalechishin is typically thorough and spends plenty of space examining those positions where one side has an extra flank pawn. He also takes a good look at the endgames of both Botvinnik and Smyslov, which further serves to show that his definition of 'essential' is actually quite an advanced one.



Unconventional Approaches to Modern Chess Volume 1

Alexander Ipatov, 360 pages, paperback

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

The Ukrainian-Turkish 2650-rated Grandmaster has his own views on how one should study and approach chess. Ipatov believes that all levels of player should work on their general chess education, while relying largely on offbeat and surprise opening weapons, as he himself has tended to do throughout his career. In this first volume of two Ipatov analyses in detail a variety of offbeat lines – all from Black's perspective – making this work suitable for those who like an early surprise or who want to add some new lines to their black repertoire.



Understanding Minor Piece Endgames

Karsten Müller & Yakov Konoval,

384 pages, paperback

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

Anything by Karsten Müller on the endgame has to be taken note of and here the German endgame maestro teams up with Yakov Konoval, a former pupil of Botvinnik's and expert on endgame databases, to explore seven-piece minor-piece endgames in some detail. There are certain five- and six-piece endgames the authors believe the reader should simply know, but to help they are particularly good at listing and explaining the key principles in each type of endgame covered.



Saunders on Chess

Follow me on Twitter: [@johnchess](#) or email: johns@chess.co.uk

My inspiration for this month's column came from a sub-section (entitled 'A Lopez Trap') of a short feature I found in a 70-year-old copy of a defunct chess newspaper about an opening trap. This short-lived UK publication, entitled *The Chess Bulletin*, was published by William Ritson Morry in 1949, though I'm not quite sure who wrote the annotations to the following game. It might have been Ritson Morry, or it might have been the writer whom he credits as the source of the game, Bruce Hayden. Anyway, here is the game with some of the brief notes which accompanied it.

G.Wernick-C.Rusnesescu Battersea vs Athenaeum, London League 1949 *Ruy Lopez*

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♖f6 5 0-0 ♗xe4 6 ♚e1 "Everyone plays 6 d4 these days but there is nothing wrong with this move for a change..."
6...♗c5 7 ♗xe5 "This line is not considered in *MCO*, the usual continuations being 7 ♙xc6 and 7 ♗c3..."
7...♗xe5? Black begins to go astray in face of the unusual White continuation. Better was 7...♙e7, which seems to leave White nothing better than 8 ♙xc6 dxc6 9 d4, etc."
8 ♚xe5+ ♙e7 9 ♗c3



9...♗xa4 "A mistake which has serious consequences, and yet who would think it was a bad move at first sight?"
10 ♗d5! "Instead of the routine recapture, this move is devastating..."
10...0-0 11 ♗xe7+ ♙h8 12 ♚h5! "Shattering all Black's illusions. There is a nasty threat of 13 ♚hx7+ ♙xh7 14 ♚h5 mate."
12...g6 "If now 12...h6 13 d4 leaves Black without resource against the threat of 14 ♙hx6..."
13 ♚h6 d6 14 ♚h5! 1-0 "A delightful finish. If 14...gxh5 15 ♚xf6 mate."

Quite an entertaining little game, isn't it? And you can imagine readers, having played through it, being eager to try it out in one of their own games. The first thing to explain, for readers aged under 50 or so, is the reference to 'MCO'. Back in those days, and right up to the early 1970s, there were hardly any books on opening theory available, so most of us resorted to a book called *Modern Chess Openings* for our opening theory.

Just one volume of about 500 pages covering all the openings, *MCO* was gospel and followed reverently. If you played something other than a move that had been sanctified in the hallowed pages of *MCO*, then you ran the risk of being condemned as a heretic and burnt at the stake. OK, I might have embroidered that last bit ever so slightly, but nevertheless any deviance from the path of true *MCO* righteousness might gain you a reputation as a dangerous iconoclast – or a complete duffer who should be banished to board 89 (some county teams really did have 100 boards in those days).

But what I am more concerned with here is annotators leading readers up the garden path. I don't have any serious issue with the annotations as they stand; it's more to do with what they don't say. Let's imagine you've dutifully followed the idea as far as the diagram in one of your own games. Fair enough, the annotator has told you Black's ninth move is a mistake, but you'll notice that he has placed most of the blame on Black's move 7...♗e5, adorning it with a question mark. But let's say you play through to 9 ♗c3 and then your opponent calmly replies 9...0-0. Look at that position and it gradually dawns on you that White's position is not great. Not a complete disaster, perhaps, but White having a slightly worse position out of the opening shouldn't be what you are aiming for.

I suppose the moral of the above story is not to put too much trust in printed annotations. Whatever the writer may say, you need to check the detail out for yourself just in case something important has been omitted.

Opening traps are rarely risk-free. Quite a lot of them occur in sub-optimal lines where the prospective trapper can easily become the trappee. But even when you know an opening trap involves playing an inferior line, there are times when you can't help yourself. I perpetrated the following one in a county match many years ago...

NN-J.Saunders County Match 1977 *Grünfeld Defence*

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♗xd5

5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♗c4 ♙g7 8 ♗e2 ♗c6 9 ♙e3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♚a5+ 11 ♙d2 ♚a3 12 ♚b1 0-0 13 d5? ♗e5 14 ♙b4?



My queen is trapped. Or is it?

14...♚f3! 15 ♙f1 The point is 15 gxf3 ♗xf3+ 16 ♙f1 ♙h3 mate.

15...♙h3 16 ♚g1 ♗g4 17 ♙c5 ♗xh2+ 18 ♙e1 ♙c3+ 19 ♗xc3 ♚xc3+ 0-1

This one can be found in the pages of *MCO*. It referred to it as "a cute trap" in the tenth edition, published in 1965. I played it fully aware that 13 0-0 led to an edge for White. Indeed, having snared a victim the first time I punted it, I became so addicted to it that it became the one and only reason I persisted with the Grünfeld for a long time thereafter. Predictably, nobody ever fell for the trap again and I scored rather poorly. This sort of behaviour is akin to the gambler who tries to continue or replicate a 'lucky streak' and ends up losing his shirt. Just as well I'm not a gambler and only grading points were at stake...

People still do fall for this Grünfeld trick, though – a check of *Mega Database* found quite a number of victims. Black scores massively after White blunders with 14 ♙b4, while those who play 13 d5, but not then 14 ♙b4 doing only slightly better. One very big fish, Israeli GM Yair Kraidman, was caught in the 13 d5 net by Peter Sowray at the 1979 Lloyds Bank, but he wriggled free and even managed to win.

I had one other trap that I was addicted to. It went **1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♗c4 ♙c5 4 c3 ♗f6** and now **5 0-0** (instead of the usual 5 d4). This Giuoco Piano trick scored far more points for me than the Grünfeld cheapo. The point is that, to take full advantage, Black must play the immediate **5...♗xe4**, when he can look forward to a healthy plus after, say, 6 d4 d5. Delay it for one move and White gets in d2-d4 without the nuisance of ...♙b4+, and a handy initiative and big centre to follow. But oceans of club players simply didn't know that. Perhaps because it wasn't in *MCO*...



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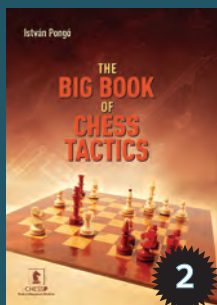
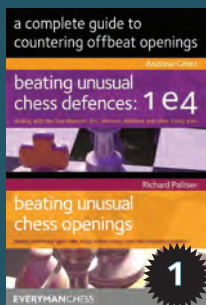


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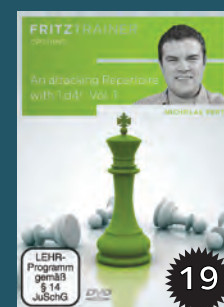
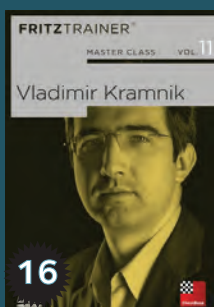
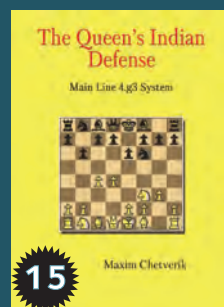
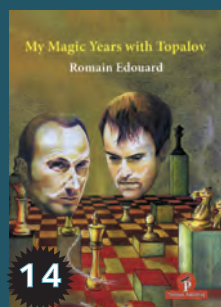
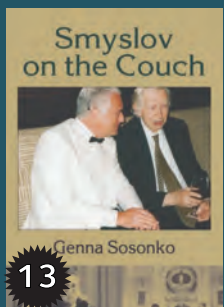
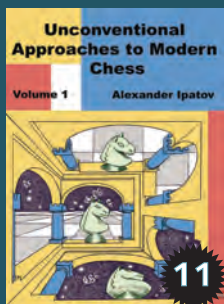
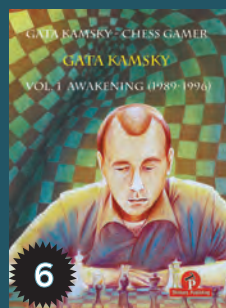
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